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RADIANT REALITY

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This magazine is dedicated to the greatest and the last Prophet Sayyidna Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) on whom the succession of Prophethood ended and was sealed forever.

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Question.

I would like to know more about what our Prophet Mohammed (saws) sunnah foods were...from which vegetables, fruits, meats, drinks, etc.

Answer.

Below is a listing of some foods that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is reported to have eaten or recommended to others.

A more comprehensive list along with further details is mentioned in the 1st volume of Shamail-e-Kubra (written in Urdu) by Mufti Muhammad Irshad Ahmad Qasimi from which the following list was compiled. An English translation of the above is titled: The Sublime Conduct of Nabi (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) – Volume MEAT:

Camel, chicken, rabbit, antelope, mountain goat, fish, partridge and hubara (this is a bird but there is difference of opinion regarding what type of bird it is. Some have defined it as quail, others as a type of goose, and yet others have described it as a brownish bird that flies very fast).

As for beef, there is no conclusive evidence states that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) ate beef.

However, it is proven that he (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) did slaughter a cow and beef was placed on his' (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasal-

lam) tablecloth as stated by Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanvi (ra) in Bawadir un Nawadir, pg. 356.

VEGETABLES:

Pumpkin, beetroot, taro (shahmah alard - this is a common vegetable in India and Pakistan known alternatively as arvi or arbi), cucumber with salt, and cooked onions.

FRUIT:

Dates (either by themselves or in combination with another food or drink such as: water, milk, butter, bread, cucumber, muskmelon or watermelon).

Kabath (fruit of the arak tree). This is the miswak tree. Allamah Ayni (may Allah have mercy on him) states that this was in the initial days of Islam when poverty was rife. He (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) did not eat it after the Muslims become affluent.

Other fruits that have been reported as being eaten by Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) include: grapes, raisins, mulberry, quince and pomegranate.

Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) also recommended consuming olive oil and once he (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was brought Jummar (palm-pith of a date tree).

DRINKS:

Among the drinks that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is reported to have consumed are: Water, honey water (honey mixed in water), milk, milk and water (this mixing is

allowed for personal consumption and water is mixed because in hot climates it serves to cool the milk).

Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) also drank nabidh (raisins or dry dates soaked in water until the water becomes sweet – but no so long that it ferments). When made in the morning it was consumed in the evening and when made in the evening it was consumed in the morning.

GENERAL FOODS & DISHES:

Sweetmeats (halwah), honey, Harisah (made from meat and pounded wheat – resembles haleem, the popular stew), Hays (a dessert made of dates, paneer (fresh cheese) and clarified butter – sometimes flour is used instead of cheese), Khazirah (meat cooked in water to which flour or bran is added), Khabis (a dessert made of dates, wheat and clarified butter), Saw-iq (a mush/porridge made of barley or wheat), Dashishah (a dish made of meat or dates that are mixed with wheat and cooked) [ii], Tharid (a dish where pieces of bread are soaked in meat and cooked with gravy), Pumpkin with Tharid, cheese, vinegar, barley-flour bread, and wheat-flour bread.

Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has also recommended Talbinah (a dish made of barley flour or with bran with honey optional), saying “Talbinah soothes the heart of the sick person, and it takes away some of the grief.”

M. Sohaib ibn Arif

Question

I was given some money as fees to pass on to the fees collector of a madrassah. The people had entrusted me with it. Whilst it was with me, I was at a shop once and realised at the till that I had left my money at home and only had this fees. With the niyyat to put it back later I opened the envelope and used some money. At the time I thought it was okay But later when I thought about it, it didnt feel right. I feel bad about this and I feel like I did khiyaanat. Am

I sinful and is my shopping haraam- I have replaced the money. I know I will never do this again Inshaa-Allah and I have done tawbah. Do I have to tell the madrassah about this incident or the person? Either way I feel like I will be disclosing a fault of mine and bringing shame upon myself. I am really embarrassed by what I have done and have done tawbah and will do more too inshaa-Allah. Please tell me if my shopping is haraam and whether I have to inform them? And if this is really khayaanat because I did intend to replace it?

Answer

The money given to you was a trust. By opening the envelope and using it elsewhere, you did not honor the trust and indeed committed an act of khiyanah. In such situations, it is necessary for one to compensate the owner of the money and make abundant tawbah for committing such a deed. Since you replaced the money, it will not be necessary to inform the madrasah and your shopping will be halal. In the future, you should make sure to fear Allah, honor such trusts, and exercise precaution in such matters.

M. Bilal Mohammad

Question.

I had my period. Is it permissible for me, after the period ends, to put on the clothes that I was wearing during my period or must I purify them again?.

Answer.

There is nothing wrong with a woman whose period has ended putting on the clothes that she was wearing whilst menstruating, so long as they are still clean and pure and none of the menstrual blood got on them.

But if some of the menstrual blood got onto the clothes, then the place where it is must be washed before praying in them. A woman came to the Prophet (saws) and said: Menstrual

blood may get onto the clothes of any one of us; what should she do with it? He said: "She should scratch it, then rub it with water, then wash it, then pray in it." (Bukhaari and Muslim).

So the Messenger of Allaah (saws) enjoined purifying the clothes before praying in them.

islamqa

Question.

What are the things that make faith decrease?

Answer.

The things that make faith decrease are as follows:

1. Ignorance of the names and attributes of Allaah makes a decrease in faith inevitable, because if a man is lacking in knowledge of the names and attributes of Allaah, he will be lacking in faith.
2. Neglecting to think about the signs of Allaah in the universe and the signs of sharee'ah (i.e., verses of the Qur'aan and miracles of the Prophet (saws), etc.). This causes a decrease in faith or at the very least it causes it to stagnate and not grow.
3. Committing sins, because sin has a profound effect on the heart and on faith. Hence the Prophet (saws) said: "The adulterer at the time when he is committing adultery is not a believer."
4. Neglecting to do acts of worship, because neglecting to do acts of worship causes a decrease in faith. But if the act of worship is obligatory and a person neglects it with no excuse, then he is to be blamed and deserves punishment. If the act of worship is not obligatory, or it is obligatory but a person does not do it for a valid reason, then he is lacking but is not to be blamed. Hence the Prophet (saws) described women as lacking in reason and in religion, and he explained their lacking in religion as being because of the fact that when they menstruate, they do not pray or

fast. But they are not to be blamed for not praying or fasting during their menstruation; rather they are commanded not to do these things at that time. But because they miss out on doing some of the things that men do, they are regarded as lacking in this regard.

Question

Is it better to read from the Mushaf or from Memory?

Answer

Just as how the Qur'an is an act of worship, to look at the Mushaf is also an act of worship. Therefore, if one looks in the Mushaf and recites the Qur'an he will get double reward.

If a person is a Hafiz, he should endeavour to preserve his Hifz by reciting by memory. Reciting by memory to preserve is ones Hifz is also an act of worship.

Ml. Saleem Khan

Question

A popular speaker said that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) never said Ummati...Ummati...Ummati in the last word before he left this world? Also, he said it is not recommended to say Karram Allahu Wajhahu after the name of Sayyidna Ali (RA).

Answer

It is proven through authentic narrations that the last statement uttered by Rasulullah (Saws) was (translation):

"O Allah! (With) the highest companion".

There is a narration that states that the following statement was from among the final words of Rasulullah (Saws),

"(Be punctual on) Salat (Be punctual on) Salat and fear Allah regarding those whom your right hands own (slaves)".

Scholars have reconciled between the two narrations saying that the first narration was the final statement uttered in general and

the second narration was the final statement made to the Sahabah. As for the narration you refer to, we have not come across such a narration. However, there are narration that mention that Rasulullah will say Ummati Ummati on the day of Qiyamah.

Mawlana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi has mentioned that regarding Ali (RA) the Khawarij used to say 'Sawwadallahu Wajhahu' i.e., 'May Allah blacken his face', so in retaliation the Ahlus Sunnah Wa al-Jama'ah began saying 'Karram Allahu Wajhahu', 'May Allah honor his face'. Moreover, many scholars of the Ahlus Sunnah Wa al-Jama'ah have used this term for Ali (RA). Therefore, to say that it is not recommended is incorrect.

Ml. Muntasir Zaman

Question

During an argument I said to my husband that I divorce him. He wants to know if we are married or divorced.

Answer

Sharia has given the right of talaq to a husband, not to a wife. The statement in reference does not constitute talaq.

Ml. Immad Ibn Arshad

Question

I am 18 years old and I had my last period in March. Since then I have not come on at all but a few days ago I noticed some brown discharge, and, thinking that I had started my haidh, I stopped praying salaah. This discharge was very less and it could only be noticed when going to the bathroom- apart from that the pad is completely clean. The discharge still comes but it is still very less. I would like to ask if this counts as being on haidh or not, and shall I start praying my salaah again?

Answer

In principle, if a woman sees a discharge of any color other than clear or pure white, it will

be regarded as menstrual blood and accordingly, will take the ruling of normal blood. These colors may include (but are not limited to) the following: red, black, green, yellow, black, beige, tan, and brown. Hence, brown discharge, regardless of the amount is regarded as *ay*. Furthermore, only the initial color of the discharge is considered. If the discharge changes color after being exposed for a while, the change in color is not considered. For example, if the discharge comes out clear or white, but upon drying up turns yellow, then the yellow color is not considered. Similarly, if the discharge comes out yellow, but upon drying up turns white, then the white color is not considered; rather, we will go by the initial color, which is clear or white in the first scenario and yellow in the latter scenario.

Since almost two months have passed since your last period, this discharge will be regarded as a part of your *ay*. Hence, you should refrain from praying salah until your menstrual cycle is complete.

Ml. Bilal Mohammad

Question

Is it permissible for women to recite the Quran or memorise it from the ipad or phone during her Periods?

Answer

In principle, a woman in hayd (menstruation) is not permitted to recite the Qur'an whether from memory, using a copy of the Qur'an or an electronic device. This prohibition is clearly stated in a hadith. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has stated:

A woman who is her haid (menstruation) and a person who is in the state of janabat (major impurity) should not recite anything from Qur'an.

However, it is permissible for a woman in menstruation to engage in dhikr and du'a'. As such, she may recite those verses of the Qur'an which are in the context of a du'a', such as Surah Fatihah, Ayat al-Kursi, etc. However, the in-

tention should be of du‘a’ and not to recite the Qur’an.

Question

Is using tasbeeh is bidah & is this imitation of Christianity?

Is giving tasbeeh as a hadiyah permissible in Islam?

Answer

It is permissible to use a “tasbih” or “subhah” in order to aid oneself in performing dhikr. A tasbih helps in performing dhikr in two ways:

By holding it in the hand or seeing it, one is encouraged and reminded to perform dhikr. This is why it is also known as a “mudhakkir” (reminder). It also helps one keep count.

Using beads or stones to help one with dhikr is supported by hadiths. Imams Abu Dawud and al-Tirmidhi narrated in their collections on the authority of Sa‘d ibn Abi Waqqas (RA) that together with Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) he came upon a woman with date stones or pebbles before her, with which she was reciting tasbih. The narration continued, but does not state Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) reprimanded her or disapproved of what she was doing. Imam al-Tirmidhi and Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani graded the chain of narration hasan. This offers proof that taking assistance from something to help one to keep count of his dhikr is permissible.

Hence, if one uses tasbih for this purpose it will not be bid‘ah. However, there should be no belief attached to the tasbih that it has intrinsic virtue or the one who recites dhikr using it is superior to one who does not.

The great scholars, Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti (d. 911 H) and ‘Abd al-Hayy al-Laknawi (d. 1304 H), have both authored treatises showing the permissibility of using a tasbih.

It is permissible to give a tasbih as hadi-

yyah.

Ml. Zameelur Rahman

Question

Is the 40 days after you give birth a tradition or Islamic?

Answer

It is not compulsory upon women to stay in house for forty days specifically after giving birth. The tradition to remain in house after birth is due to health reasons and is not an obligation of Shari‘ah.

Ml. Zakariya

Question

I take bus to commute for work. I find prayer time in bus. Can I pray in the moving bus. If I don’t do, I am afraid will miss my prayer and the prayer time will be gone. I don’t want to miss my prayer so perform with sign while sitting on the seat. Is this permissible. Pls. advise.

Answer

In principle, it is not permissible to perform Fardh salah while traveling on a conveyance. However, if a person fears that the time of salah will pass out; he should perform it while on the conveyance and thereafter repeat the salah.

Ml. Asim

Question

If a person keeps a residential plot with no defined intention whether it could be used for living in future by himself/family or whether to be sold at a good price if need arises; will zakaat be payable on such property?

Answer

If a person purchased a land with no defined intention, it is not considered as stock in trade. Zakaat is not payable on such property.

Mufti Ismail

Lesson from
The Qur'an



The Unlawfuls

Prohibited for you are: the carrion, the blood, the flesh of swine, and what has been invoked upon with (a name) other than that of Allah, and the animals dead by strangulation, dead by blow, dead by a fall, dead by goring, and that which a beast has eaten unless you have properly slaughtered it; and that which has been slaughtered before the idols and that you determine shares through the arrows. [5:3]

This is the third Verse of Surah al-Ma'idah where a number of fundamental and subsidiary injunctions and rulings have been described. The first problem relates to lawful and unlawful animals. As for animals whose meat is harmful for human beings - whether physically, for it may pose the danger of disease in the human body, or spiritually, for it may hold the danger of spoilage in human morals or its many emotional states - these the Qur'an has classed as evil declaring them to be unlawful. Then there are animals which have no physical or spiritual harmfulness, these the Qur'an has declared to be good, pure and lawful.

The first prohibition in this verse is that of dead animals. These refer to animals which die without having been slaughtered, either because of some sickness or because of their natural death. The meat of such dead animals is extremely harmful for human consumption, not simply 'medically', but spiritually as well.

However, the Holy Prophet has exempted fish and locust as reported in Ahadith narrated in the Musnad of Ahmad, Ibn Majah, Darqutni and al-Baihaqi and elsewhere.

The second thing declared unlawful in this verse is blood. By saying: (Or, flowing blood - 6:145) in another verse of the Holy Qur'an, it was made clear that blood here means blood which flows. For this reason, liver and spleen, despite being blood, stand exempted from the purview of this injunction. The Hadith referred to a little earlier where fish and locust have been exempted from the purview of 'Maitah' or carrion also carries the exemption of liver and spleen from the definition of blood.

The third thing declared unlawful is the flesh of swine. 'Lahm' or flesh means the whole body of the swine which includes fat, ligaments, everything.

The fourth prohibition is that of an animal which has been invoked upon with (a name) other than that of Allah (dedicated in this manner, or slaughtered). And, at the time of slaughtering it as well, the act of invoking any name other than that of Allah will amount to flagrant Shirk, which is the ascribing of partners, sharers or associates in the

pure divinity of Allah. This animal, thus slaughtered, shall fall under the injunction of a dead animal with the consensus of Muslim jurists. This is what was done by the disbelievers of Arabia when they slaughtered animals invoking the name of their idols, or as some ignorant people would do when they would slaughter animals in the name of some saint or savant. It is also possible that someone does invoke the name of Allah at the time of slaughtering but actually offers it for one other than Allah making that sacrifice for the pleasure of whatever that non-Allah is. If so, this too, according to a consensus of Muslim jurists, is unlawful under the injunction of: (what has been invoked upon with [a name] other than that of Allah).

The fifth category made unlawful is that of an animal which has been strangled to death, or which has choked itself to death while struggling out of some trap. Though Munkhaniqah (dead by strangulation) and Mawqudhah (dead by blow) are included under the broad Qur'anic term of 'Maitah' (carrion), but they have been mentioned here particularly because the people of Jahiliyyah took them to be permissible.

The sixth category of animals is Mawqudhah (dead by blow). It means an animal which has been killed by some hard blow, the kind of blow that comes from being hit by a staff, rod or rock. Should an arrow strike and kill its game in a manner that the arrow does not hit it with the sharp arrow head but does end up killing it just the same from the force of the blow itself, then, this too will be counted as Mawqudhah and will, as such, be unlawful. Sayyidna 'Adi ibn Hatim said to the Holy Prophet: "There are times when I hunt with an arrow heavy in the middle. If the game is killed with this arrow, can I eat it?" He said: "If the animal has been killed by a blow from the heavy side of the arrow, it is included under Mawqudhah - do not eat it (and if it has been hit by the sharp-edged point and it has wounded the game, then, you can eat it). Al-Jassas has reported this narration in Ahkam al-Qur'an citing his own

chain of authorities. Here, the condition is that the arrow should have been released from the bow after having said Bismillah.

The game killed by a gun bullet has also been ruled by Muslim Jurists as included under the category of 'Mawqudhah' and is, therefore, unlawful. Imam al-Jassas reports from Sayyidna Abdullah ibn 'Umar that he used to say: which means that an animal killed by gun shot is the 'Mawqudhah'; therefore, it is unlawful. Imams Abu Hanifah, Shafi'i, Malik and others are all in agreement with this view (al-Qurtubi).

The seventh category is called 'al-Mutarad-diyah' (killed by a fall). It means that an animal which dies by falling from a mountain, mound or a high building, or which dies by falling into a well or some similar depth is also unlawful. Therefore, says a report from Sayyidna 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud: If you see a game standing on top of a mountain and you shoot your arrow at it after reciting Bismillah and the hit of the arrow causes the game to fall down and die, then, do not eat it.

Because, here too, the probability exists that the animal did not die with a hit from the arrow. May be, it died from the shock of the fall - if so, it will be counted under the category of 'Mutarad-diyah' (dead by a fall). Similarly, if an arrow is shot at a bird and it falls down in water, its eating has also been prohibited for the same reason that probability exists that the hunted bird had died by drowning (al-Jassas).

It should also be noted that Sayyidna 'Adiyy ibn Hatim too has reported the same ruling from the Holy Prophet - (al-Jassas).

The eighth category is that of 'An-Natihah' (dead by goring). It refers to an animal which has died in some collision such as by bumping against a train or vehicle, or it has been gored by butting against another animal.

The ninth category is of an animal which died when torn apart by some beast.

After describing the unlawfulness of these nine categories, an exception has been mentioned. It was said: . It means: If you find any of

these animals alive and you slaughter it properly, then, it becomes lawful - eating it is permissible.

This exemption cannot be applied to the first four categories, because in Maitah (carrion) and Dam (blood), the very possibility does not exist; and as for Khinzir (swine) and what falls under : ma uhilla li-ghayrillah (what has been invoked upon with [a name] other than that of Allah), they are unlawful in themselves - slaughtering or not slaughtering them is equally irrelevant. Therefore, there is a consensus of Sayyidna 'Ali, Ibn 'Abbas, Hasan al-Basri, Qatadah and other righteous elders on the view that this exemption applies to categories after the first four, that is, to the 'Munkhaniqah' (dead by strangulation) and what comes after it. So, it comes to mean that, should the animal be found alive under all these circumstances with commonly discernable signs of life, and slaughtered with the name of Allah while in the same condition, then, it is lawful - whether dead by strangulation, dead by blow, dead by a fall, dead by goring or that which a beast has eaten. Any of these slaughtered while sensing signs of life in it shall become lawful.

Under the tenth category, an animal which has been slaughtered at an altar is unlawful. The altar refers to slabs of rocks placed around the Ka'bah which the people of Jahiliyyah took as objects of worship and they would bring animals near the altars and sacrifice them dedicated to these rock slabs. They thought it was worship.

The people of Jahiliyyah used to eat all these kinds of animals, animals which are evil. The Holy Qur'an declared all of them to be unlawful.

The eleventh practice declared unlawful in this verse is the determining of shares with arrows: al-istiqsam bi al-azlam. The Arabic word, 'al-azlam' used in the Qur'an is the plural of zalam. This was an arrow used to determine shares during the days of Jahiliyyah. They were seven in number. One would have 'yes' and the other would have 'no' or some similar words written on them. These arrows were kept in the custody of the keeper of the Ka'bah.

When someone wanted his fortune told or wished to find out whether doing something in the future will be beneficial or harmful, they would go to the keeper of the Ka'bah, present money gift to him in anticipation of his service, who would, then, take out these arrows from the quiver one by one. If the arrow so drawn turned out to be the one with the word 'yes' on it, they thought that doing what they wanted to do was beneficial; and if, the arrow drawn had a 'no' on it, they drew the conclusion that they should not do what they wanted to do. The reason why this has been mentioned in the context of unlawful animals is that small groups of pagan Arabs used to have a joint slaughter of a camel or some other animal but, rather than divide up shares from the meat to all participants in accordance with the number of shares originally subscribed to, they would decide it by drawing these arrows. Obviously, by doing that, someone would remain totally deprived, someone else would get too much and there would be someone getting less than what was his right. Therefore, the unlawfulness of this procedure was explained along with the unlawfulness of animals.

'Ulama' say that all methods used to divine future happenings or to find out what is 'Ghayb' (Unseen) - whether divination through numbers ('Ilm al-Jafr or Jafar), or palm-reading, or the taking of omen - fall under the injunction of 'determining shares with arrows.'

The Arabic term for 'determining shares with arrows' is sometimes used for Qimar or gambling as well wherein rights are determined by the methods of lots or lottery. This too is Haram (unlawful) on the authority of the Qur'an which prohibits it under the name, 'Maisir' (gambling). Therefore, righteous early elders Sa'id ibn Jubayr, Mujahid and Al-Sha'bi said that the way the pagan Arabs used arrows to determine shares, people of Persia and Asia Minor used chessmen and pieces of backgammon for the same purpose. They all fall under the injunction about arrows.

*Adapted from Ma'ariful Qur'an by
Mufti Muhammad Shafi Usmani (ra)*

Lessons from Sahih Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

The Book of Salah

Chapter 91 : What should be the distance between the person praying and the sutra.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

The sutra should be fixed just near to the place one prostrates i.e., where one's head touches the ground; it should not be too far away. Keeping sutra nearer makes a musalli feel safe and concentrate well. Further, by keeping it near, the musalli can stop the person who tries to pass between him and sutra. If it is kept at some distance then these benefits cannot be achieved, and it may also cause lot of inconvenience to people who need to cross in front of a Mmusalli.

Hadith No. 469

Narrated Sahl (bin Sa'd)

The distance between the Musalla of Allah's Apostle and the wall was just sufficient for a sheep to pass through .

Hadith No. 470

Narrated Salmah

The distance between the wall of the mosque and the pulpit was hardly enough for a sheep to pass through.

Comments

From the above quoted hadiths, it is

clear that there used to be not much distance between Rasulullah (saws) and his sutra in an open area. Same was the case while he prayed in the mosque.

Chapter 92 : (To offer) Salaah facing a spear.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

According to the Shariah, mentions Maulana Gangohi (ra), it is impermissible to execute actions which bear any resemblance with unbelievers. Here, Imam Bukhari wants to say that a spear can be used as a sutra, and this does not fall in the category of imitating unbelievers. As per some scholars, here Imam Bukhari tries to mention the permissibility of using anything and everything, small or big, as sutra; this will also be evident in the succeeding chapters. (Eidhahul Bukhari)

Hadith No. 471

Narrated Abdullah

The Prophet used to get a Harba planted in front of him (as a sutra) and pray behind it.

Comments

Imam Tahtawi quotes from Ibn Amir Haj:

“The sunnah in placing a barrier is that there should be a metre and a half or so between

it and the person praying.

If one does not find something to place, then one can draw a line horizontally/in perpendicular (to one's chest) like the crescent/new moon, because it has been reported in the works of hadith that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "If one does not find a stick with him, then he can draw a line."

It is recommended (mustahab) to leave pushing back the person passing by. This is why it is better to keep them from passing by merely gesturing with the head; eye or other than the two, or by saying subhan-Allah. It would be makruh (offensive) to combine the both.

A man may push back by raising his voice by saying Subhan Allah aloud. A woman should do so by gesturing, by striking the right hand fingers on the left hand.

It is a sin to pass immediately in front of a person praying, but that person's prayer will not be invalid (as people commonly yet mistakenly believe).

If one passes unintentionally he will be excused and not sinful.

The best way to avoid passing in front of a person praying is as follows and kept in mind:

If one is sitting in front of the person praying, then it is permissible for him to stand up and leave (as this is not passing in front of a person).

If two persons want to pass by, then one should stand with their back to the person praying, letting the other pass by. Then the other should do the same and let the other pass by. We come to know that if a person is sitting in front of someone praying, then it is permissible for him to pass by. (Umdatul-Fiqh)

The above is the best way to get out of this situation if the person praying has not put a barrier.

Who will be sinful in the following cases:

The passerby will be sinful if he had other space to leave and go and the person praying had no other place to pray.

The person praying will be sinful if he had other space to pray and the person passing had no other space/room to leave.

If the passerby has room to leave and the person praying space to pray, then both will be sinful. Both, the people praying and passing by should be cautious all the time. (Umdatul-Fiqh and other works) .

Chapter 93 : (To offer) Salaah facing a short spear (al-Anzah).

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Al-Anzah means a short spear. Here again, the same issue viz., using a spear as sutra is being discussed.

Hadith No. 472

Narrated Aun bin Abi Juhaifa

That he had heard his father saying, "Allah's Apostle came to us at mid-day and water was brought for his ablution. He performed ablution and led us in Zuhr and Asr prayers with an Anza planted in front of him (as a Sutra), while women and donkeys were passing beyond it."

Hadith No. 473

Narrated Anas Ibn Maalik

Whenever the Prophet went for answering the call of nature, I and another boy used to go after him with a staff, a stick or an Anza and a tumbler of water and when he finished from answering the call of nature we would hand that tumbler of water to him.

Comments

Both these hadiths have been discussed in previous chapters.

Chapter 94 : The sutra in Makkah and elsewhere.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Imam Bukhari has established this chap-

ter to refute the opinion of some people who hold that no sutra is required in Makkah. According to Imam Bukhari, the sutra is needed everywhere, and there is no exclusiveness of Makkah in this. Now the question remains what about the Masjid al-Haram? As per the learned scholars, if salaah is being offered close to the wall of Ka'ba then no sutra is required otherwise it is required to be kept, but as per Imam Tahaawi, as quoted in Eidhahul Bukhari, the people circumambulating (tawwaf) the Ka'ba are exempted, and they can pass in front of the people offering salaah as the circumambulation is considered equivalent to salaah.

According to Ibn Hajr, it is mentioned in a chapter in Musanaf Abdur Razzaq: "Nothing disrupts salaah in Makkah"

Imam Ahmad says that it is permissible to pass in front of a Musalli anywhere in Makkah. He says: "Makkah is not like any other place, it is distinctive."

Ibn Hajr says that the hadith quoted in this chapter is weak and Imam Bukhari has tried to refute it by establishing the Tarjamatul Baab.

Hadith No. 474

Narrated Abu Juhaifa

Allah's Apostle came out at midday and offered a two Rakat Zuhur and Asr prayers at Al-Batha and an Anza was planted in front of him (as a Sutra). He performed ablution and the people took the remaining water left after his ablution and rubbed their bodies with it.

Comments

The above hadith mentions that Rasulullah (saws) offered prayers in Batha, a place in Makkah, and placed a sutra. It is always better to use a sutra when praying in an open area.

Chapter 95 : (To offer) Salaah facing a pillar.

Umar said, "Those who are praying are more entitled to the pillars than those conversing."

Umar saw a man praying between two pillars

and moved him up to a pillar and said, "Pray towards it."

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Further elaborating the issue of sutra, Imam Bukhari now mentions that it is not necessary to inject something in the ground and take it as sutra, but that one can pray towards trees, pillars or place a pillow for the purpose.

It is mentioned that some people used to sit and talk while reclining against the pillars in the mosque while others wanted to offer salaah facing the pillars, therefore, Sayyidna Umar advised that people wanting to offer prayers are more entitled to take pillars as sutra than those reclining against them.

Hadith No. 475

Narrated Yazid bin Al Ubaid

I used to accompany Salmah bin Al-Akwa' and he used to pray behind the pillar which was near the place where the Qur'an's were kept I said, "O Abu Muslim! I see you always seeking to pray behind this pillar." He replied, "I saw Allah's Apostle always seeking to pray near that pillar."

Hadith No. 476

Narrated Anas

I saw the most famous people amongst the companions of the Prophet hurrying towards the pillars at the Maghrib prayer before the Prophet came for the prayer.

Comments

The first hadith shows that Salmah bin al-Akwa preferred to offer salaah behind the pillar which was near the place where the copies of Qur'an were kept. On being asked about it, he said that he had seen Rasulullah (saws) doing the same.

In the second hadith, Sayyidna Anas says that he had seen some senior companions competing with one another in getting a place behind the pillars to offer Maghrib prayers.

Excessive Love of the World

*Straight
Talk*



The real Fitan (or trials) have been in the past, and bigger ones are yet to come: the Animal, Yajuj-Majuj and Dajjal. Meanwhile, we need to fight out the greatest of all Fitan, the mother of all trials and tribulations, that strikes almost every individual, viz. ignorance of the Qur'an and Sunnah and excessive love of the world, writes SYED IQBAL ZAHEER.

Hadiths in Bukhari, as also in a few other collections, runs as follows: `Abdullah ibn `Umar reports that the Prophet came out of `Aisha's quarters and said, "O Allah, grant us barakah (benediction) in our Shaam; O Allah grant us barakah in our Yemen." People around him interjected saying, "And our Najd also." (That is, pray for it also). But he repeated, "O Allah, grant us barakah (benediction) in our Shaam; O Allah grant us barakah in our Yemen." People around him again interjected saying, "And our Najd also." (That is, pray for it also). But he said in reply to perhaps the third request, "Tremors there. And tribulations. And from there rises Shaytan's party."

According to another narration, also by `Abdullah ibn `Umar, who said, "I saw the Prophet signaling towards the East and saying, "Tribulations are there. Tribulations are there – from where Shaytan's forces arise."

Yet another narrative reports Ibn `Umar as saying, "The Prophet did the Fajr prayer, termi-

nated the prayer with a Salam, then he turned to the direction from where the sun rises and said, "Lo! Tribulation is there. Lo! Tribulation is there – from where Shaytan's forces rise."

In the above narrations Qarn al-Shaytan, rendered by us as "Shaytan's forces," has several connotations, but most scholars have homed in on our choice.

What are "Shamina" (our Shaam: Syria) and "Yamanina (our Yemen)?" Putting together the interpretations of the land and field experts, Madinah belongs to the territories at its left up to and including Syria; and Makkah belongs to the territory on its right down until Yemen. Incidentally, the Prophet was born in the Yemen frontier and died in the Syrian frontier. About Yemen he said that wisdom belongs to Yemen, and about Syria he said that Iman will reside in Syria during the final days of the world.

As for Najd, it is the area that falls in between, that is, the wide East. Linguistically, Najd is every plateau. East is, of course, the well-known east

where the sun rises from. But we know that the Sun rises from two sides of the horizon, one during summer, another during winter. So, all the lands falling in between such as parts of Iran, India, and the lands in the same direction deep in the east could be alluded to by the words “where the Sun sets.” But the earliest commentators have said, in view of another trustworthy report that the allusion is to Iraq.

Actually, earliest commentators have not said much about the tribulations emerging from the east; about Iraq as the Najd of the hadith; or emerging from where the forces of Shaytan arise. The reason for paucity of comments is obvious. The Prophet himself (saws) did not elaborate. So, how could they? They were far more concerned about their own affairs, with every prospect of what they might be asked about on the Judgment Day to worry themselves about what the Prophet said in uncertain terms, if not in allegoric manner.

But, later generations, as they witnessed many disturbing affairs emerging from Iraq, began to suspect that the hadith about tribulations were alluding to it. For instance, `Ali was murdered there, Hussain lost his life there, the Shi`ee sect arose from there, as did the Khawarij, the Qaraamitah – to name but a few. But as other scholars have pointed out that it is the same Iraq from where the mighty legal experts like Abu Haneefah and Ahmad b. Hanbal arose, heading a list of hundreds of renowned Fuqaha', Muhaddithin, language experts, poets, historians, scientists and others. They have, therefore, observed prudence and recommended caution in judging Iraq and its people as causing Fitan.

On the other hand, there are those of recent times, who disturbed by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait during the closing years of the last century, found it cooling to their hearts that by Najd they should definitely understand as the allusion to Iraq. They have heaped accusations on Iraqis and condemned them as they would condemn the devils.

On another front are those who were, and remain, confused about two groups: one ritual (the Ahl al-Hadith), and the other doctrinal, (Salafi). They assume the two as one, and since there has been some (on-going) disunity in the Ummah on the basis of doctrines (`Aqaa'id), they condemn both groups, assuming that they are two faces of the same coin.

In actual fact, one is not the other.

In ancient times, until almost the modern, when the term Ahl al-Hadith was used, it was in the sense of those who were engaged in the study, development, and dissemination of the Hadith. They were not referring to a Fiqh group. When Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal was asked about who the Firqah Najdiyyah (the Succeeding Group) were, he answered, “If it is not Ahl al-Hadith, who else could it be?” He made such a statement at a time when there was no organized Fiqh group among the Muslims who called themselves Ahl al-Hadith. There were the Imam-iyyah, the Khawarij, the Mu`tazilah, etc., but not Ahl al-Hadith. Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal himself was the founder of a Fiqh School, because he was of the Ahl al-Hadith, that is, those who studied the Hadith, collected the Hadith, codified the Hadith and spread the discipline of Hadith. Ahl al-Hadith of those times did not have their own Fiqh School. Invariably they followed one of the four schools. There were other Fiqh Schools, but they were not followed. Thawri's Fiqh, or of Da'ud al-Zahiri, and others were Fiqh Schools on paper, with sparse following.

With the establishment of the four Fiqh schools, people began to give up Taqleed of individual scholars (from the Companions, Tabe`iyyun, Taba` Tae`iyyun, etc.) and gradually shifted to committing themselves to the Taqleed of one of the four schools of Law – mostly depending upon where they lived in the Islamic Empire. This situation remained for about 1200 years after the Prophet (saws).

Thus we see, scanning the later ages, that Ibn Hajr, a great Muhaddith and prominent expo-

ment was a Shafe`ee, so was Ibn Kathir as was Imam Nawawi, while Badruddin `Ayni – another great Muhaddith, was a Hanafiyy; as was Mulla `Ali Qari. Ibn Taymiyyah, although a Mujtahid in his own right, was a Hanbali. You name any and he was a follower of one or the other Fiqh schools. The reasons are many, but simple: The Fiqh schools are well advanced and developed. They offer legal guidance that covers the entire gambit of life. To repeat what they have already accomplished is not simply unwise, but also somewhat fanatical. And, a fresh attempt is bound to fail because a huge team of Mujtahideen to co-operate, is a part of history. Let alone a team, a single Mujtahid of the truest sense, is not available. Finally, you have those centuries that they had. This explains why for a thousand years, one and all, the scholars and the commoners remained following the four schools of Fiqh, until the arrival of a time characterized by the spread of ignorance.

As an organized group, with their own religious leaders, with inter-marriages between themselves (though not strictly), and although remaining within the mainstream of Muslims, the Ahl al-Hadith are a recent group. They are of Indian origin and are not a sect. As a group they appeared some 150 years ago, if not less, during the colonial rule of India. It is alleged that the British promoted this offshoot in order to sow seeds of disunity among the Muslims, who were the only community resisting British occupation of India, while the vociferate claimers to loyalty to India of today, they were actually serving the British then, until Muslim led resistance began to fructify. Then they jumped into the bandwagon.

Initially, this new group was restricted to India, and with partition, to Pakistan. The rest of the Islamic world did not know them as a fifth Fiqh School. If they could not break away completely from the mainstream, it was because they could not develop a complete school of Jurisprudence. They have restricted themselves –

perforce – to separating out from the four Fiqh Schools in matters of rituals alone: Salah, Zakah, Fasts and Hajj. Their main points of differences are that they stop with the Qur`an and Hadith. They sideline, although they cannot completely ignore Ijma` (consensus) and Qiyas (analogy). Also, they do not adhere to the Qur`an as strongly as the four Fiqh Schools. The Ahnaf, in particular, will not shy away from any Qur`anic statement, even if implicit, in favor of a Hadith, however explicit. Further, they could not codify their ritual Laws also, because of internal differences and want of highly learned intellectually developed scholars. In some places, they have set up their own mosques, but half-heartedly. If they have set up their own Madrasa, little they differ from others, and in some cases, they teach Hanafiyy books.

Thus, to emphasize: Ahl al-Hadith are an organized group who do not follow any of the four Legal Schools in matters of rituals (`Ibaadaat). In all Islamic countries where they have Shari`ah Courts, following Hanafiyy, Shafe`ee, Hanbali or Maliki Jurisprudence, the Ahl al-Hadith willingly submit to those Courts. Nowhere are there in the Islamic world courts of the Ahl al-Hadith. Actually, setting up an Ahl al-Hadith court is out of the range of possibility because Ahl al-Hadith scholars could not lay down the Principles of Law, like the four Fiqh schools have done, to base their Legal opinions upon. (It appears that there are insurmountable difficulties in working out Principles of Law, ignoring Ijma` and Qiyas).

The Ahl al-Hadith Jama`ah have their strongest presence in the place of their origin, in India, Pakistan, and in scattered groups in other Asian countries. One of the Ahl al-Hadith scholar (Mawlana Thana`ullah) lamented in 1933, that when Mawlana Ahmad of Delhi – one of Ahl al-Hadith scholar, reached Madinah (around 1925), “he found no one following the Madhab of the Ahl al-Hadith in the town.”

Typically, in modern times, `Allamah Nasiruddin appeared as spearheading the move-

ment, but he himself fell out of grace of his comrades, and has few followers now, although still respected for his Hadith learning.

So, that is one group: the Ahl al-Hadith. And the historical ahl al-Hadith is a different thing: the students, masters and lovers of Hadith: those who prevailed over the centuries, but are now almost extinct. The Jama`ah of Ahl al-Hadith is different. They are a recent formation.

(One might also note that a new class of Ahl al-Hadith is now arising, almost globally. Although they call themselves Ahl al-Hadith, they are actually freelancers. They reject Sahih Ahadith at will, even of Bukhari and Muslim, as they also reject the practices and precepts of the Companions, including the four Caliphs. They do, and can declare anything as allowed or disallowed, depending on what suits them, where it suits them, and when it suits them, arguing with anything from any Islamic source. But about them we shall write later Allah willing).

We spoke of two groups above who the masses treat as one. One is the Ahl al-Hadith, the other is called the Salafis. They are ill-defined both by their adversaries, as well as by themselves. It appears to be the youthful rebels from among the Ummah, who feel humiliated by the onslaught of the West, militarily and culturally, and find that the leaders of Ummah are either inept or impotent. In anger, they rebel against all the leaders, in particular the four Fiqh schools, assuming that the division caused by them is the reason for weakness of the Ummah and that following them has led to the stagnation of the Muslims. Their main contention is that the Ummah should follow the Salaf (the first three generation Muslims) in matters of doctrines, and, understand the Qur'an and Sunnah in the way they understood. Thirdly, they believe that anything done that smacks of innovation must be declared Bid`ah to be avoided like pork. They do not know the difference between innovation and Bid`ah. They have been greatly influenced by Sheikh `Abdullah ibn al-Wahhab.

Now, since Sheikh `Abdullah ibn al-Wahhab is known as a Najdi scholar, the public attributes the problems it is facing with the Salafis to Ahl al-Hadith, via them to the Ahl al-Hadith, via them to Sheikh `Abdullah b. al-Wahhab, via him to Najd, and, finally, believes that the Fitnah of Najd can be attributed him and to them all.

There are several errors. The Fitnah of Najd of the modern times, is not a Fitnah at all. The allusion by the Fitnah (trials and tribulations) of Najd, as in the Hadith, are Iman-threatening Fitnah, not the disunity people witness where there were no divisions before their arrival. This is a minor problem, and the Ummah will, Allah willing, get over it. The Ummah has remained united despite Salafism, and despite the so-called fifth School of Fiqh, and, Allah willing, will remain united. What has divided it in the past, and will divide it in future, is Jahal (ignorance). Islamic education can deal with it.

Another error is to believe that the Ahl al-Hadith are Salafis. Wrong. Among the Salafis are, mostly young rebels, from Ahl al-Hadith, from the Hanafis, Hanbalis, freelancers and from all sorts of groups. They join and remain within the volatile group for a decade or so, and then get dissolved in the main stream. Newest young men take their place. This group is no Fitnah either, nor or they a sect.

Yet another error is to believe that Sheikh `Abdullah ibn al-Wahhab was of the Ahl al-Hadith. Wrong. He was a Hanbali, declared it openly, in his writings, and was of undivided loyalty.

Thus, for all reasons that some maulawis hold, for declaring the two groups we are talking of as the Fitnah of the Hadith, well, they are one hundred and twenty percent wrong.

In fact, ancient scholars have warned against taking the hadiths of this citation as too literally, and refrain from blaming the Iraqis or others that have or might appear. Iraq has had a great contribution to Islamic glory. Further, the Prophet has made the comments he made about

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Satan's Ways to Men's Hearts

Imam Ghazali (ra)

The example of the heart is like that of a fortress, and Satan is an enemy who seeks to storm this fortress, to take control of it, and to rule over it. Moreover, any fortress cannot be said to be secure from the enemy except when its entrances are guarded, and the gaps in its walls are vigilantly watched over. Therefore, he who is not wholly familiar with his fortress walls cannot guard them.

Guarding the heart against the evil promptings of Satan is a prescribed duty and an individual obligation upon every Muslim who is mukallaf (a legally competent person from the standpoint of Shari'ah).

There is no doubt that the best defense against Satan's raids on one's heart may be achieved by recognizing the heart's entrances that Satan takes to deliver his venom. Knowing these ways and entrances is the first line of defense against Satan.

Therefore, this knowledge becomes an obligation – as it is stated in the well-known fiqh principle that: That which is indispensably connected with fulfilling an obligation is itself obligatory.

The entrances of Satan are in effect the qualities or traits of man, and they are many. But we shall in the following refer to the principal ones:

Anger and Lust

Anger, as it is rightly said, is the ogre of the

intellect. When the levies of the intellect weaken, Satan's forces assail, and whenever man becomes angry, Satan plays with him just as a lad does with a ball.

It is related that a saint once asked Satan: "Show me how you overcome a person." He replied: "I take him while in anger or desire." In another story, it was said that Satan appeared to an ascetic who asked him: "What qualities of the sons of Adam are most helpful to you?" Satan answered: "Quickness of temper; for if a man is quick-tempered, I can turn him upside down just as lads toss a ball.

Envy and Greed

Also among the great breaches through which Satan's mischief sneaks into peoples' heart is envy (hasad) and greed (hirs). For whenever a man is greedy for anything, his greed renders him blind and deaf, as the Prophet (saws) said: "Your love for something blinds and deafens." (Abu Dawud, through a weak chain, but the hadith meaning is correct). The light of insight detects Satan's entrances, but if envy and greed becloud it, man's ability to distinguish greed from evil is compromised and, as a result, Satan's hand is strengthened. He adorns, in the eye of the greedy one, everything that leads to the realization of this desire, even if it be condemned and immoral.

It is related that when Prophet Nuh (Noah)

entered the ark he took into it a pair of every sort as instructed by Allah to do so. One day, Nûh saw in the ark an old man whom he did not recognize. Nûh said to the man: "Who are you and what are you doing here?" The old man said: "I am Satan and I came to dominate the hearts of your followers, so that their hearts would be with me and their bodies with you." So Nûh said to him: "Get out from here, O enemy of Allah." Satan answered: "You know Prophet Nûh, I destroy mankind by means of five things, and I shall disclose to you three of them, but I shall withhold from you the other two." Allah then revealed to Nûh: "You do not need the three; but ask him about the two." So Nûh said to Satan: "Never mind the three and tell me about the two?" He replied: "They are the two which never fail me, and I use them to destroy man; they are: greed and envy. For through envy I incurred divine curse; and for greed, the whole Paradise was permitted to Adam save one tree, but I made the best out of him through greed."

Satiety of Food

Another great way Satan takes to men's hearts is satiety of food, even when it is lawful and pure. Satiety strengthens the lusts, and lusts are weapons that come in handy for Satan. It is related that Satan appeared to Prophet Yahya ibn Zakariyah who saw hooks of every sort attached to him (i.e. Satan). Therefore, Yahya asked: "What are these hooks on you?" Satan replied: "These are the lusts by which I hunt the son of Adam." Yahya asked: "Do I have any of them?" Satan answered: "Perhaps you become surfeited with food and so I make Salah and thikr (remembrance of Allah) a burden to you." Yahya asked: "What else?" Satan answered: "Nothing other than what I told you." So Yahya said: "By Allah! I shall never eat my fill again." Satan replied: "And, by Allah, I shall never again give a sincere advice to a Muslim."

It is said that there are six blameworthy qualities in overeating: First, it banishes fear of Allah

from one's heart. Second, it rids one's heart of compassion towards humankind, for he supposes that they are all satiated. Third, it makes *ibâda* (worship) a burden. Fourth, if he hears wise speech, he finds nothing graceful in it. Fifth, if he speaks in admonition, it makes no impression on his listeners. Sixth, it stirs up disease within him.

Love of Adornment

Also of Satan's great entrances to believers' hearts is the love of adornment in furnishings, attire, and residence. When Satan sees this quality dominant in one's heart, he sets up his camp in that heart and indwells it, and keeping on bidding him to make the house more adorable, to adorn its ceiling and walls, and to extend its walls. He invites him also to adorn his apparel and his mounts, and seeks to enslave him therein in his whole life long. In addition, when man succumbs to Satan in this, the latter will have no need to busy himself with him again; for, like a vicious circle, one phase of this leads on to another until he meets his death embroiled in the wicked snares of Satan.

Hastiness

Also of Satan's great doors is haste and lack of resoluteness in affairs. Allah says: Man is created of haste. [Sûrat Al-Anbiyâ, 21:38] and again: And man was ever hasty. [Sûrat Al-Isrâ', 17:12] And He says to his Messenger: Hasten not the Quran until the inspiration is completed for you. [20:113] Also the Prophet (saws) said: Haste is from Satan and calculated action is from Allah. (Tirmithi) This is because actions should follow insightful understanding (*tabaira*) and experiential knowledge. Insightful understanding requires reflection (*ta'ammul*), and unhurried action (*tamahhul*), but haste precludes this. For when man seeks to make haste, Satan readily dispenses to him his own evil from whence the man knows not.

WHY I LEFT SOCIAL MEDIA

Umm Hafsa Ramisah

“Oh! You’re no longer on Facebook?” This is a regular question that I am faced with whenever conversations about if I have seen or heard this or that on Facebook arise. I cannot say I have absolutely no clue what social media is, but I can say for certain I have absolutely no idea what goes on there, no clue what the latest viral video is or what the latest fashion trends are. My time used to be occupied with the social media life, the latest ‘news, views and interviews’, and spending my free time simply scrolling through my news feed to see what the answers were to the famous “What’s on your mind?” questions. Of course, I had all my friends and acquaintances on my friend’s list and I found many interesting pages that caught my attention day in and day out. My free time became about scrolling the news feeds, and then scrolling some more, and then some more. Monotony began to creep in; for how long will my fingers just slide up and down the screen allowing more and more Facebook stories to reveal themselves?

I began to question myself one day, “What was I doing with my life?” My children were both off to school and I had taken up reading as an extra hobby, yet in between the pages of the many novels that I read, my mind would become drawn away to check the latest updates, in case I missed something important. Is this what



my life had become? I knew deep down inside I wanted more in life, I yearned to do more, to be more, to give more, but something was holding me back, something had hold over me that kept me from achieving what I needed to become better. I reflected, I questioned, I took a long hard look about what truly mattered and I decided one day, just out of nowhere like a stranger in the night, to call it quits! Just like that! Cold turkey. I hit the deactivate button and removed the Facebook app off my phone to remove that temptation staring at me in the face every time I turn on my phone.

Now, it wasn't that I had little to no friends on Facebook or that my posts and pictures didn't get the likes and the comments, because they did. It

wasn't that I didn't have much to say or share, because I did, but it was something so much more. It went a much greater distance than simply needing a break. I wanted to be ME. I wanted to be the person I needed to be, to feel that sense of achievement in life, that sense of contentment and Peace that we all search for, and most importantly, to work as hard as I could before my time on this earth expires and I leave without fulfilling my purpose in life. I wanted more.

I am certain many of us feel this way, we feel like we should be doing more in life, like we need to be doing something that will give us more meaning and fulfilment and bring us closer to Allah – yet something is holding us back. That hold, may not necessarily be social media, but it may be a variety of other factors that sometimes we may just need to shake, in order to become a better version of the person we are now. My reasons for leaving the social media platform were many, of which I am sure many of you will agree, however, my aim is not to weigh the ills of social media against the positives, because we have heard about these time and time again. Rather, I will instead give you reasons why life away from social media can be just as or even more fulfilling than the happiness you feel from seeing all your friends like and share your status updates.

1. Value your Privacy – In a world where it seems that the only way a person can feel validated, feel accepted and 'be somebody' is by opening the doors to the most private aspects of their life, the need to value the sanctity of the home and the family once again is of utmost importance. As Muslims, and as humans in general, the need to have something that is just our own without having to show it to the world is as important today as it has ever been. The world around us has become so open and loud that the need to put it all out there can sometimes affect us in ways we never even imagined.

2. Reconnect with the Qur'an – Alhamdulillah, while social media has its negative side, there is also the positive side of it. However, having

that connection with the Quran and experiencing the joys and peace by picking up the Quran every day, cannot be replaced by social media. Gaining some extra time being off social media can be well spent in reading the Book of Allah, and earning vast amounts of reward. Allah says,

“[This is] a blessed Book which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded.” [Surah Sad: 29]

3. Learn Something New – For the many Muslims, having knowledge of the basics in Islam is essential, but often-times, going beyond that isn't deemed necessary. Changing that mind-set about the Deen of Islam can vastly change our lives and making the time to do so, is the first step after making a firm resolve to do so. If you cannot read Arabic properly, start from scratch – and there is no shame in learning from the beginning, no matter your age. Find classes to attend at your local masjid or even online, that can increase you and help you to become a better Muslim and better person overall, InshaAllah.

“Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge” [Surah Fatir: 28]

Mu`awiyah (ra) reported:

The Messenger of Allah said, “When Allah wishes good for someone, He bestows upon him the understanding of Deen.” [Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

4. Start a Soup Kitchen/Do Volunteer work – We all know the command from Allah to feed the poor and take care of the orphan and Alhamdulillah many of us try our best to give charity when we can, however, taking a bigger step and putting things in place to regularly feed the poor, while encouraging others to do so will amass rewards that we cannot begin to count, by Allah's Mercy. Spending your time involved in any volunteer project will bring a greater satisfaction than we could ever possibly imagine.

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Manufacturing Islamophobia in the Media

Theresa Corbin

When it comes to Islam and Muslims, the Western world by and large has turned on the news to learn about this faith and its people. The danger of this kind of education is manifesting in the actions of Americans, with hate rallies popping up around the country, mosque burnings on the rise, and Muslim citizens being attacked in public and in their own homes.

A striking example of how the media plays a role in these hate crimes is the case of Randolph Linn, who attempted to burn down a Masjid in Toledo, Ohio. He confessed in court that “he had gotten ‘riled up’ watching Fox News.” After confessing what provoked his crime, the judge presiding over his case asked Linn if he knew any Muslims or if he knew anything about Islam. Linn responded, “No, I only know what I hear on Fox News and what I hear on radio.” (source: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/12/21/randolph-linn-fox-news-mosque-arson_n_2345708.html)

At the heart of this media fear-mongering that influenced Randolph Linn so profoundly, are many unqualified Islamophobes playing the role of pundits and experts. These Islamophobes are all too willing to tell the public their uninformed version of Islam—using war, Middle

Eastern politics, tragedy, and terrorism to advance their careers.

Wayne Simmons

One example of this kind of fake expert is Wayne Simmons, a self-described “terrorism analyst.” Simmons himself became news recently when he was indicted for lying about having 27 years of CIA experience.

Wayne Simmons was often looked to for information on “Islamic” terrorism based on his falsified CIA experience. According to CNN, “Simmons regularly made extreme and factually dubious statements pertaining to terrorism and national security. Just this January, he claimed there were ‘at least 19 paramilitary Muslim training facilities in the United States.’” With his fabricated “insider information,” Simmons leads audiences to believe that Muslims are an eminent threat in the US. (Source: <http://money.cnn.com/2015/10/15/media/wayne-simmons-tv-commentator-arrested/index.html>)

However, Simmons’ fear-mongering and lying didn’t just affect domestic opinion and politics. He was also indicted for using his fake credentials to gain government security clearances and advise military personnel overseas.

Simmons has done untold damage domes-

tically and globally. But he is not the only “expert” in the media who manufactures anti-Muslim sentiment.

Brigitte Gabriel

With no higher education than a high school degree and one year of a business administration course, Brigitte Gabriel, a Lebanese Christian, positions herself as an expert in Middle Eastern politics and all things Islam.

The fact that she lived through the Lebanese Civil War is her only claim to expertise on Terrorism, Islam, and Muslims. She self-styles her experience living in civil war as “surviving Islamic terrorism,” as the title of her book proclaims: *Because They Hate: A Survivor of Islamic Terror Warns America*.

However, the war that Gabriel claims was one of Muslim “terrorists” against Christian “victims” was in reality much more complex. In part it was a Muslim versus Christian war, but it was also an inter-Muslim and inter-Christian war, where ethnic, secular, and religious groups often shifted alliances.

In 2007, at the Christians United for Israel annual conference, Gabriel delivered a speech full of bigotry, confusion, and nonsense. Gabriel said, “[...] It’s the difference between good and evil [applause].... this is what we’re witnessing in the Arabic world, they have no soul, they are dead set on killing and destruction. And in the name of something they call ‘Allah’ which is very different from the God we believe... [applause] because our God is the God of love.” (Source:

[A hand holding a spray can labeled "BLACK SPRAY RAIN" next to a crescent moon and star symbol. The hand is labeled "THE MEDIA". The drawing is signed "JMc 2013".](http://www.talk2action.org/story/2007/7/27/22357/2657/Front_Page/Mc-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

[Cain_and_Lieberman_Frolic_At_CUFI_s_Festival_Of_Hate](http://www.talk2action.org/story/2007/7/27/22357/2657/Front_Page/Mc-Cain_and_Lieberman_Frolic_At_CUFI_s_Festival_Of_Hate))

In this speech, Gabriel seems to not realize that she herself is an Arab, and in fact possesses a soul. She confuses her own Arab ethnicity with the religion of Islam. And she fails to remember her own language, Arabic, where the word for “God,” even to Christian Arabs, is “Allah.” Whether she is pandering to an audience she knows is ignorant about these facts or she herself has truly forgotten, it is impossible to know.

But Gabriel’s confusing and dangerous ranting goes beyond muddling the cause of the Lebanese Civil War, or what the difference is between an Arab and a Muslim. She also claims to be an expert on what Muslim extremists looks like.

Gabriel told Australian news, “a practising [sic] Muslim who goes to mosque every Friday, prays five times a day, and who believes that the Koran is the word of God, and who believes that Mohammed is the perfect man and (four inaudible words) is a radical Muslim.” (Source: <http://www.loonwatch.com/2009/04/a-case-study-in-sincere-hypocrisy-brigitte-gabriel/>) Claiming that any Muslim who exercises their right to practice their faith is an extremist, is ironically an extreme view itself.

Gabriel, and her ill-informed and bigoted rhetoric, is frequently invited on Fox News to speak about her “expertise” and has even produced programs on terrorism for “Good Morning America” and “Primetime.”

Ayaan Hirsi Ali

Ayaan Hirsi Ali is another Islamic “expert” sought out by the media. She is an ex-Muslim who rose to fame in Europe because of her self-appointed mission to expose “the repressive nature of Islam.” It was this and her stance on immigration that led “to an invitation from the Dutch Liberal party to join them and, very rapidly, to a seat in parliament.” (source: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/may/21/jasonburke.theobserver>)

According to The Guardian, “Hirsi Ali had falsified her original asylum application in Holland, saying that she had not come from war-torn Somalia as she claimed, but from Kenya, where she had lived peacefully for 10 years. The fact that she had lied was well-known, retorted Hirsi Ali, making the point that she was fleeing a forced marriage. Not so [...] the marriage was not made under compulsion [nor] was Hirsi Ali raised in a strict Muslim family.” After these discoveries, Holland found itself in political crisis. (source: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/may/21/jasonburke.theobserver>)

Yet in spite of her track record of lying, Hirsi Ali was invited to take up a position at a conservative think-tank in Washington DC. (source: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/may/21/jasonburke.theobserver>)

And she has also been invited to speak to her “experience” and “expertise” on BBC, CNN, Comedy Central, and ABC News, among other media outlets.

Having been invited on many news programs and interviews, the Western media looks to Hirsi Ali’s opinion about Islam and Muslims as a resource. Claiming in one interview with Reason Magazine that “Islam should be defeat-

ed [...] because right now, the political side of Islam, the power-hungry expansionist side of Islam, has become superior to the Sufis and the Ismailis and the peace-seeking Muslims.” (source: <https://reason.com/archives/2007/10/10/the-trouble-is-the-west/singlepage>)

Hirsi Ali fans the flames of anti-Muslims sentiment. And she is basing her information on nothing more than conjecture and her falsified experience of living in Somalia during civil war.

Hirsi Ali has no real evidence to support any of her claims about Islam nor about the events in her own life. Hirsi Ali’s climb to fame has resembled that of Gabriel’s. Hirsi Ali claims to be an expert simply because she is from a Muslim country. This does not an expert make.

Hirsi Ali, Gabriel, and Simmons are just a few of many fake experts in the media who claim to know all there is about terrorism, Islam, and Muslims. When in reality, their credentials never add up.

This is not to say that Muslims never commit acts of terrorism. It is a fact of the world that we live in that a minority of Muslims do commit heinous crimes against humanity, claiming legitimacy through Islam. These problems won’t go away if we deny that they are real. They won’t go away if fake experts continue to offer up the legitimacy of Islam to these extremists. And they won’t go away if the media and Islamophobic pundits keep isolating and edging out of the discussion the majority of Muslims who want no part in extremism.

What Can We Do?

We Muslims do have a lot of work to do in terms of excavating the pluralistic and compassionate society that Islam fostered in its first communities and in its golden age. But we can never get back to this place if we are constantly trying just to survive the vitriol and the flame of anti-Muslim sentiment stoked by fake experts.

Cont’d on page 32

Truth and Relativity

Ali Unal

Einstein's theory of relativity (1905) dealt a severe blow to the worldview based on Galileo's laws of simple cause and effect physics, which reached its peak in the nineteenth century Goethe's observation that "people running after an idea fall into more and more error", was demonstrated tellingly, and scientists were obliged to acknowledge the limitations of scientific theories. For example, Masaryk's admission that: "Theories, after nourishing for a while the organs in the body of science, dry up and fall to the ground like leaves" pointed out how difficult it is to maintain constant and permanent success in science.

For centuries, scientists accused religion of being a collection of dogmas and religious people of being dogmatists. However, when classical physics' limitations were revealed, scientists realized that they were guilty of the same charge. In other words, as Russell put it: Newton's law reigned for such a long time and explained so many things that no one believed that it would ever need correcting. But eventually it became apparent that correction was needed. Let there be no doubt about it, one day these corrections will need to be corrected.

Science advances, if and when it does, by trial and error. Despite this, Einstein's theory of relativity, which replaced classical Newtonian physics, is treated in many circles as absolute truth.

That it one day will need revision or even give way to a new theory is not mentioned.

It seems that going to extremes while pursuing a single idea is a constant human trait. While each great idea contains a share of truth, it is not the only means or expression of truth. If we think of truth as a light at the center point of a circle or a straight line, we see that the light is reflected ray by ray to an infinite number of points on the circle's circumference or along the straight line. Each point is touched by a ray of the truth, and therefore each can be said to be true. However, only the light of the truth in the center never changes, since it is absolute; all other points are relative. What gives the relative truth its particular dimensions, properties, and relevance is the receiving point's nature, properties, time, and conditions. This is true for both the natural and social sciences, and for such Islamic sciences as tafsir (Qur'anic commentary) and fiqh (jurisprudence).

Given this, is there a permanent absolute truth? Yes, such a truth does exist, but only in the spiritual dimension of things. In fact, from one view, even those principles related to the spiritual dimension of things contain exceptions, for they are connected to the visible external dimension and thus are only relative truths. When discussing absolute and general laws, even scientists cannot affirm absolutely their own laws, such as cause and effect, and say: "If the universe is in T1 condition at this moment, it cannot be concluded that a little later it will be in the same condition."

As stated above, the difference between ab-

solute and general principles is seen in the social sciences and even in such Islamic sciences as tafsir and fiqh. In the Realm of Unity, however, single and indivisible truth opens the door to countless relative truths in this material and quantitative world. For example, the Qur'an mentions good works as being virtues with inherent value. And yet we know that some types of virtues may not be considered virtue under different circumstances and times. For example, an administrator's serious manner may be considered dignified at work but haughty at home. A weak person's self-respect before a strong person is praiseworthy, but undesirable in a strong person before a weak one.

In the same way, what is erroneous for one person can be meritorious for another. Thus we say: "The pious deeds of righteous people are sometimes the mistakes of those near to God." Again, an act that earns a single merit for one person can earn a million merits for another. As long as there is no conflict with the word's literal meaning, its root is studied, and Arabic grammatical rules as well as Islam's basic principles are not violated, each meaning that any qualified interpreter derives from those Qur'anic verses open to interpretation must be respected.

The most obvious historical manifestation of a general principle's relative truth is seen in the sphere of justice. Absolute justice considers personal and public rights as equal. But there are times when one or even both sets of rights cannot be protected, when the most fundamental rights encompassing both the individual and society are endangered. During those times when individual rights must be sacrificed for

the public good, relative justice becomes necessary. Historically, the institution of a hereditary sultanate in the Muslim world arose from the need to establish public and individual security by ending internal clashes and civil wars. In other words, it was demanded by relative justice. Such justice, required by the necessity of compelling circumstances, gains the same authority as absolute justice.

This world contains such a variety and abundance of colors, shapes, properties, times, and conditions that relativism cannot be avoided. Nevertheless, we need some almost absolute truths to guide our lives. For example, saying that causality has no creative effect in the universe is absolutely true, for everything is in God's hand. We cannot be absolutely certain of what will happen next, and our lives and that of the world actually consist of this moment.

Living this truth consciously, along with believing and surrendering our free will to God, we must admit that causes operate in a relatively (not absolutely) reliable manner in this life. Drawn over absolute reality like a shawl or veil, these causes allow it to assume an appearance of familiarity or habit and thereby make life livable. Eventually, all technology and science are constructed on this veil. In this broad region of human action and observation, Newton's classical physics has precedence over Einstein's relativity physics.

Relativity reminds us of our vulnerability. Those climbing the ladder of Divine Knowledge find that the highest state they can reach through their heart is the station of amazement. As Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "We did not know You as we

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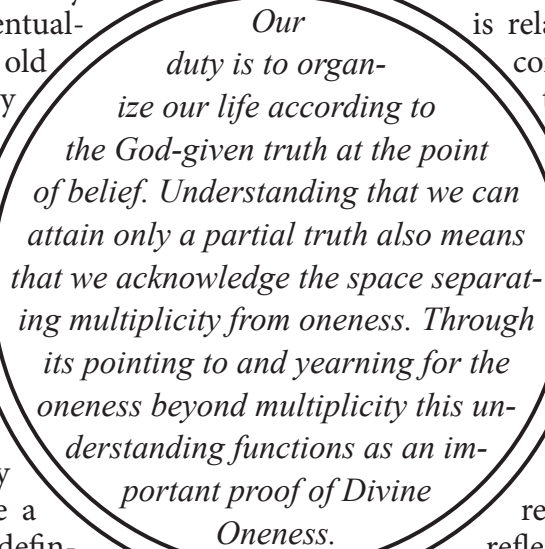
should, O Known One,” and “How could I see Him? What I saw was light.”

Similarly, scientists solve one problem only to discover new ones, a process that eventually causes their trust in science’s centuries old foundations to collapse. Just when they “find” the truth, they see everything slip from their grasp. The fact of relativity makes them exclaim: “The only thing I know is that I don’t know anything,” which then leads them, like moths circling a light, to flap their wings eternally around the light of Divine Knowledge.

Relativity shows that absolute truth lies only in—and can be known directly only by—Revelation. Therefore we have a clear and absolute need for religion and definitive religious principles. As two people cannot agree even on a simple matter, absolute truth can come only from God. Our duty is to organize our life according to the God-given truth at the point of belief. Understanding that we can attain only a partial truth also means that we acknowledge the space separating multiplicity from oneness. Through its pointing to and yearning for the oneness beyond multiplicity this understanding functions as an important proof of Divine Oneness.

Relativity is an important measure for living peaceably among people, due to the different professions, temperaments, schools, and sects that have arisen in philosophy, teaching methods, and religions. All dispositions, sects, schools, and methods have portion of the truth, and none are absolutely wrong or false. The important thing is to unite around a common point. When we look to the past and various catastrophes from the perspective of Divine Destiny, and when we look at future responsibilities and Divine orders from the perspective of free will and human responsibility, it is possible to reconcile even proponents of fatalism and free will.

The essential thing is to live believing that absolute truth, when it touches this world and becomes relevant for us,



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is relative and thus conditioned by the points, circumstances, and conditions of those receiving it. Based on the analogy given above, countless relative truths reflect the absolute truth located

at the center point of the circle or the straight line at innumerable other points, according to each one’s properties, color, and design. As long as people recognize, acknowledge, and defer to their own distance from the absolute truth and do not transgress their limits, unmanageable conflicts will not arise. But when people lose this sense of proportion and their capacity to know and propose the truth, when they take what is relative for what is absolute, they fall into error with catastrophic results.

Cont’d from page 16

those of the East (whoever they are), not to condemn them, but to specifically warn a people who are bold, courageous and fearless. They may hold their cool and be not excited to action that might lead to excesses.

The real Fitan have been in the past, and bigger ones are yet to come: the Animal, Yajuj-Majuj and Dajjal.

Meanwhile we need to fight out the greatest of all Fitan, the mother of all trials and tribulations, that strikes almost every individual, viz. ignorance of the Qur’an and Sunnah and excessive love of the world.

WOMEN'S MOSQUE

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Khalid Baig

The Women's Mosque of America has started operations in Los Angeles. It is not a mosque per se, but the name of a non-profit organization. It began with holding female only Jumuaah prayers, in an old synagogue with Stars of David etched on the stained glass windows. The decision to use this venue was made to "promote peace."

Creating a separate space for Muslim women is a noble idea. Unfortunately the organizers chose the one event for this project for which it has no basis in the Shariah. Muslim women are not required to offer Jumuaah. They are allowed but not required. (They can offer the Dhuhr prayer instead.) Further by consensus of scholars of all schools, Muslim women are not allowed to lead Jumuaah prayers or deliver Jumuaah Khutbahs. Not surprisingly the project met with disapproval from the great majority of local Muslim scholars who objected exactly on this ground. The women who prayed there were advised to still offer their Dhuhr prayer as the prayer obligation remained undischarged.

But there is a larger issue that has not been discussed. One wonders what the officers of this corporation would think of establishing a women only school or women only college. Obviously if women need access to Islamic education in an exclusive space, then would not a daily reg-

ular school be far superior to a twenty minute sermon delivered once a month? Alas their future programs make no mention of such a plan. On the contrary other programs will be coed.

It is also interesting to see the media reaction. This was a media event and all the big names were there. And they were excited. From the Los Angeles Times to the Wall Street Journal, from ABC news to Fox News, everyone praised this as a historic event. It was considered a key development in empowerment of Muslim women. "Maybe we could get a female Luther out of this," Los Angeles Times reported an excited congregant as saying.

The question that we must ask is what the media reaction would be if the organizers had opened a women's only college instead. Would that be considered a historic event that would open the doors to scholarship for Muslim women? Would that be praised by the same media as a space "where Muslim women can 'bring their whole self,' learn more about their faith and foster bonds of sisterhood?"

It is more likely that this would be ridiculed as a step backwards, as another sign of oppression of Muslim women.

Why? Why the same act is praiseworthy in one case and blameworthy in the other? The answer may be that it is flouting the traditions and

well established Islamic teachings in one case and complying with them in the other. The first act is therefore considered empowering and the other enslaving. The hypocrisy has a rationale!

It may be therefore empowering to deconstruct the notion of “women’s empowerment” itself.

The sad fact is that we are caught up in the discourse of empowerment. Everyone these days is for “women’s empowerment.” And it is taboo to question this dogma. But let us ask, where does this word come from? Does it come from the Islamic discourse or its textual sources? The Qur’an does not talk about “women’s empowerment.” Neither does Hadith. Neither does the Islamic literature produced by authorities and scholars of varied persuasions over the centuries. If in doubt please tell me what is the Arabic term for “empowerment” and where do you find it in the Islamic textual sources?

Let us face it: It is a foreign term. And like other foreign terms it has to be examined carefully before we start using it and submit to its dictates.

The term as used today comes from the feminist discourse. And it brings with it the entire feminist agenda. Simply stated, the ideology of women’s empowerment means establishing an absolute-no-holds-barred-equality between men and women. Dozens of international organizations are devoted to promoting “women’s empowerment” and use the term interchangeably with “gender equality” and “gender mainstreaming.” At a more basic level it means fighting for your rights. As American feminist Gloria Steinem said, “Power can be taken, but not given. The process of the taking is empowerment in itself.”

Let us contrast this with Islamic history. The pre-Islamic Meccan society, like all Jahiliyya societies then and now, had its share of the weak and the downtrodden. Women were oppressed. So were slaves. Anyone belonging to another tribe was discriminated against. Did the Proph-

et (saws) go to them and say I have come to empower you? Did he invite them to start an empowerment movement? If he did, the seerah and Hadith books do not record it. Rather his message to everyone was, “Become a believer and you will be successful.” The promise was *falah*, the eternal and ultimate success, to be achieved through *iman* (faith) and *taqwa* (righteous action performed with the fear of displeasing Allah). To men and women, to slaves and masters, the rich and poor, Arabs and non-Arabs, the Prophet (saws) said one thing:

“O people, say there is no god but Allah and you will be successful.”

Belief in Allah and submission to His commands were the road to *falah*.”

The society that was so built did eliminate the injustices to the slaves and women and the poor and all the downtrodden people. But the path to that uplifting was not through the talk of empowerment. Rather it was through an exactly opposite strategy. Islam did not urge women to fight for their rights; it urged the men to discharge their responsibilities toward the women, fearing Allah. It did not urge the poor to fight for their rights; it urged the wealthy to discharge their responsibilities toward the poor, fearing Allah. It also urged the women to discharge their responsibilities toward their husbands. In fact it changed the focus of everyone from their rights to their responsibilities. For in the Hereafter we’ll be held accountable for our responsibilities, not our rights. If we were shortchanged on our rights here, we will be fully compensated there. But if we were negligent in discharging other’s rights on us, we will have to pay heavily for it there. Needless to say, with everyone concerned with their responsibilities, the rights of the others are automatically secured. Further, with justice being a supreme goal of Islam, redressing injustices becomes everyone’s job not just those of the victims. With this approach Islam obtained justice in the society but without the incessant friction and disharmony that is an

essential result of an ongoing fight. It uplifted women without instituting a perpetual gender war. As Imam Zaid Shakir notes: "Islam has never advocated a liberationist philosophy."

The language of empowerment is diametrically opposed to it. It makes everyone focus on their rights, not their responsibilities. The battle cry is, watch out for yourself for no one else will. This then becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. With no one being primarily concerned with discharging their responsibilities, securing your rights becomes a lifelong struggle. You will only get those rights for which you fight. Hence the perpetual campaign for women's empowerment.

What has that led to? The exact opposite of what it aimed at. The empowerment rhetoric did not end exploitation of women; it actually has opened exciting new avenues for it. As Dr. Brooke Magnanti wrote in the Telegraph, "Too often the word is used as a smokescreen for increasing consumerism, a cousin of L'Oreal's 'because you're worth it' whereby you can presumably empower yourself by buying shoes and pretty little journals, which is somehow worthier than simply buying things because you need or like these things. Or worse still, by landing some 9-to-5 corporate grinding job."

But it has done much more. It has destroyed the home and family beyond recognition. Even more, it has drastically changed men and women. Here are the words of Father John McCloskey, a Catholic priest lamenting the disaster that this world has faced.

"There is something radically wrong with the family and the relationship between the sexes in the West as we rapidly approach the third millennium of the Christian era... Indeed it would be hard to find similar situations in history, unless it be the pre-Christian paganism of the Roman Empire (cf. St. Paul's Letter to the Romans I: 11-20) or the behavior of the barbarian hordes of central Asia as they poured into a weak and decadent empire... Today, in societies that are nominally Christian, we witness the phenome-

non of women who do not act like women, nor men like men, nor families like families. Codes of moral behavior that have made the family the central unit of society and have been the "guardrails" of civilization for centuries have been discarded as antiquated."

If we blindly follow the talk of women's empowerment, we will also be headed to this lizard's hole. Or we can follow the path of falah shown by the Prophet (saws) and say goodbye to the borrowed language and borrowed ideologies.

The Women's Mosque organization was started by two ladies, a comedy writer and a lawyer, as a reaction to their "mistreatment" at some other mosque. The "mistreatment" consisted in somebody in that mosque gently pointing them upstairs to a separate area for women. They apparently thought that the separate upstairs space that had been provided was beneath them. One wonders if that is the attitude of a humble servant of God. In reaction they organized an event that violated the commands of the same God whom they so desperately wanted to serve. And they started a first ever "protest mosque."

Among other firsts, it also encouraged women to "enter the mosque in the type and style of clothing in which they feel comfortable." In other words it decreed that Islam does not prescribe any dress code for prayers. Anyone who thought otherwise was asked to keep their opinions to themselves. It asked that no woman should remind another woman to, say, cover her head while praying. If the mosque was a consecrated space which imposed its own rules of decorum and proper conduct, including dignified and modest attire, the "Women's Mosque" had nothing to do with that.

Such is the tragedy when we become consumed by our desires. These ladies and their sympathizers would do well to listen to the words of Imam Zaid Shakir: "Our fulfillment does not lie in our liberation, rather it lies in the conquest of our soul and its base desires. That

conquest only occurs through our enslavement to God.”

The empowerment rhetoric did not end exploitation of women; it actually has opened exciting new avenues for it.

Does Islam ask the women to get sacred knowledge? Absolutely. And today, unlike the bleak picture painted by the marketing department of Women’s Mosque, women are very active in seeking religious knowledge. They are doing it from their homes over the phone and Internet; in gatherings arranged at private homes; in schools established for this purpose. And they are doing it in mosques as well. There are some institutions who have thousands of women studying with them from their homes. They are studying Arabic, Hadith, Fiqh, Qur’an, and so on. May Allah bless these efforts and multiply them. This is the right answer to the problem of women education. Not a Jumuah khutbah delivered by a woman once a month.

The organizers of the Women’s Mosque are right that for proper education women need a safe space where they are by themselves. Where they can discuss their problems freely, get inspired by other sisters, and seek both emotional and intellectual fulfillment from them. Where they do not have to act like men or compete with them. Where women can be women. If one is guided by Islamic teachings and not the talk of empowerment then one could easily see that it should lead to the development of female only schools, colleges, and youth groups.

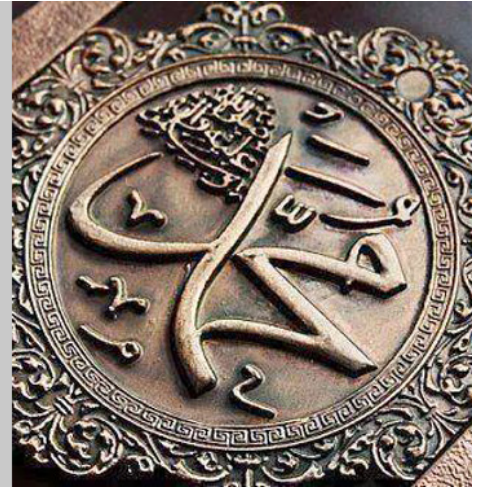
What Happens When You Embrace Islam

When Muhammadanism (an inaccurate name for Islam) is embraced, paganism, fetishism, infanticide and witchcraft disappear. Filth is replaced by cleanliness, and the new convert acquires personal dignity and self-respect. Immodest dances and promiscuous intercourse of the sexes cease; female chastity is rewarded as a virtue; industry replaces idleness; license gives place to law; order and sobriety prevail; blood feuds, cruelty to animals and slaves are eradicated... Islam swept away corruption and superstitions. Islam was a revolt against empty polemics... It gave hope to the slave, brotherhood to mankind, and recognition to the fundamental facts of human nature. The virtues which Islam inculcates are temperance, cleanliness, chastity, justice, fortitude, courage, benevolence, hospitality, veracity and resignation... Islam preaches a practical brotherhood, the social equality of all Muslims. Slavery is not part of the creed of Islam. Polygamy is a more difficult question. Musa did not prohibit it. It was practiced by David and it is not directly forbidden in the New Testament. Muhammad limited the unbounded license of polygamy. It is the exception rather than the rule... In resignation to God’s Will, temperance, chastity, veracity and in brotherhood of believers, they (the Muslims) set us a pattern which we should do well to follow. Islam has abolished drunkenness, gambling and prostitution, the three curses of the Christian lands. Islam has done more for civilization than Christianity. The conquest of one-third of the earth to his (Muhammad’s) creed was a miracle.

Issac Taylor

Cherish Your Wife the Prophet's Way

Muhammad Fathi



In Islam, the relationship between husband and wife is a strong bond to be nurtured with kindness, love and mercy. It is so significant that Allah Almighty mentions it in the Qur'an as one of His great signs in the world:

And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought. (Ar-Rum 30:21)

Prophet Muhammad (saws) is the role model for every Muslim in all aspects of life. When you read about the Prophet's treatment of his wives, you will be amazed by the great level of care, gentleness, love and compassion he showed them. The following collection of hadiths highlight glimpses of his guidance in this regard:

She Deserves the BEST Treatment

1. Abu Hurairah (ra) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (saws) said:

"The most complete of the believers in faith, is the one with the best character. And the best of you are those who are best to their women." (At-Tirmidhi)

2. Ibn `Abbas (ra) narrated that the Prophet (saws) said:

"The best among you is the best towards his wife, and I am the best of you to my wives." (Ibn

Majah)

3. Abu Hurairah (ra) narrated that the Prophet (saws) said :

"A believer must not hate a believing woman (i.e., his wife); if he dislikes one of her traits he will be pleased with another." (Muslim)

4. `Abdullah ibn `Amr ibn Al-`As (May Allah be pleased with them) narrated that the Prophet (saws) said:

"The world is but a (quick passing) enjoyment; and the best enjoyment of the world is (to have) a pious wife." (Muslim)

Express Your Love

5. Anas (ra) narrated that the Prophet (saws) was asked, 'O Messenger of Allah, which of the people is most beloved to you?'

He answered: "'A'ishah."

He was asked, 'And among men?'

He said: 'Her father.' (Ibn Majah and authenticated by Al-Albani)

6. `A'ishah (ra) said, "Never did I feel jealous of any of the wives of the Prophet except for Khadijah, although I have never seen her."

She added, "When Allah's Messenger slaughtered a sheep, he said: Send it to the friends of Khadijah."

One day `A'ishah mentioned Khadijah in a way that made the Prophet upset. He told

`Aishah, “I have been granted her love (by Allah)”.

Render Love into Actions

7. `Aishah (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah would give her a vessel to drink, when she was menstruating, then he would look for the spot where she had put her lips on and put his lips on the same spot. (An-Nasa'i)

8. Anas narrated that the Prophet had a Persian neighbor who was good in cooking soup. One day he prepared some soup and invited the Prophet to it. `Aishah was present so the Prophet suggested to the neighbor that she should join them. The neighbor refused to include her in the invitation. The Prophet, therefore, declined the invitation.

The Persian repeated the exclusive invitation for the Prophet who, once again, declined the invitation.

In the third attempt, the Persian neighbor invited both the Prophet and his wife, `Aishah (ra). Then, the Prophet accepted his invitation and went with `Aishah to the man's house. (Muslim)

9. Al-Aswad asked `Aishah about what the Prophet used to do at home. She replied. “He used to serve his household but when it was time for the prayer, he would get up for prayer.” (Al-Bukhari)

Have Fun with Her

10. `Aishah reported that she accompanied the Prophet in a travel when she was still slim. The Prophet told people to move forward and then he asked `Aishah to race with him. They had a race and `Aishah won.

In a later travel, when `Aishah had forgotten the race and had already gained weight, the Prophet told her to race with him again. She declined, “How can I race with you while I am in such a condition?” The Prophet insisted and they did have a race. The Prophet won this time. He laughed then and said, “Now, we are even.”

11. `Aisha reported:

It was the day of `Eid and some Ethiopians were playing with shields and spears. Either I requested Allah's Messenger or he himself asked me whether I would like to see the display. I replied in the affirmative. Then he let me stand behind him; my cheek was touching his cheek and he was saying, “Carry on, O Bani Arfida (i.e., Ethiopians)!” When I got tired, he asked me if that was enough. I replied in the affirmative and he told me to leave. (Al-Bukhari)

Love that Transcends Time

12. Anas ibn Malik (ra) narrated that when something was brought to the Prophet, he would say, “Take it to so-and-so because she was a friend of Khadijah (his deceased wife)...” (Authenticated by Al-Albani)

13. `Aishah (ra) reported:

Once, Halah bint Khuwailid (the sister of the Prophet's first wife, Khadijah) sought permission to enter. The Prophet recognized and recalled the manner of Khadijah when she sought permission to enter. So, he was deeply moved and said, “O Allah, may she be Halah bint Khuwailid!” (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

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We need to concentrate on being proactive instead of always being reactionary. We need to both understand what is expected of us by the media (emotional, irrational, and dangerous) and what Islam requires of us (patience, rejection of anger, having wisdom).

We must help non-Muslims to realize that if they wouldn't want people to learn about their religion from the news media, then they shouldn't learn about Islam from that source, either. And we have to get the message across that learning about Islam from Islamophobes is just like learning about Judaism from anti-Semites.

Gratefulness

A Muslim's Way of Celebrating Everyday

Lilly S. Mohsen

“No honey” I sighed, “We are Muslims! We DON'T celebrate Thanksgiving.”

“But why?” My daughter wondered. “I mean it's a good reminder to be thankful!”

“That's the beauty of Islam, my love. We are taught to thank Allah every day!”

“Wow! You remember to thank Him EVERY SINGLE DAY?”

“I do!”

... Do I?

Well, we thank Allah during prayers when we read the Surat Al-Fatiha, right?

And... ummm you know, when someone asks how we're doing we automatically say, “I'm good thanks to Allah”, or “Alhamdulillah”.

Hmm... what else? Oh, I got one! In Ramadan, we thank Allah A LOT!

See? We don't need a huge roasted turkey to remind us to be thankful to the Great Lord. It's in our system, it's in our hearts and souls and minds to praise Allah every chance we get.

So why are you writing this article, Missy?

Honestly? Because for the first time I realize that being grateful isn't just about mumbling words of seeming appreciation and then moving on. Thankfulness is a lifestyle, a consuming feeling that Allah wants us to absorb to the fullest because He knows that's the only way we will feel better. Anyone can say “thank you”, but it's the emotion that accompanies the words that makes all the difference.

So, in this article we will remind our-

selves of a few points to make our gratefulness more meaningful and productive.

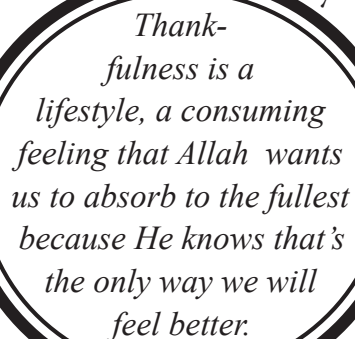
Remember that Nothing is Really Ours!

I remember my mother telling me a story about a friend who reminded her to thank Allah for saliva. I was like ‘huh?’ This woman couldn't secrete liquids in her mouth and had to sip on water day and night to be able to talk or eat. Oh my God, how many blessings do we take for granted?! The ability to see, hear, walk and talk effortlessly are all things we need to be thankful for every day.

Renewing the appreciation helps us look at life differently. Imagine being surprised you still have your sight intact every time you wake up! Now apply that concept to everything else like

your health, mon-family, etc., and you'll realize nothing is really yours. It was all given to you and you alone. Making a choice to have grateful attitude

interrupts our anxiety and gives us a huge sense of power. But if you're not thankful for what you already have, what makes you think Allah would



Thankfulness is a lifestyle, a consuming feeling that Allah wants us to absorb to the fullest because He knows that's the only way we will feel better.

be prompted to give you more?

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, ‘If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]; but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe.’ [14:7]

Most of us are not really big on the words. It would help if there were practical ways of showing gratitude to Allah , and who is better than the Prophet (saws) himself to be our guide?

Abu Dharr reported Allah’s Apostle as saying:

“In the morning charity is due from every bone in the body of every one of you. Every utterance of Allah’s glorification is an act of charity. Every utterance of praise of Him is an act of charity, every utterance of profession of His Oneness is an act of charity, every utterance of profession of His Greatness is an act of charity, enjoining good is an act of charity, forbidding evil is an act of charity, and two rak’ahs (Duha) which one prays in the forenoon will suffice for all”. [Sahih Muslim]

Who Do You Thank First?

Most of us have had loved ones get extremely sick, and have went through the panic attacks of calling doctors and running to the nearest ERs with no shoes. We’ve paced the waiting rooms and pleaded with nurses for more information, and put all our faith in legendary surgeons known for their high success rates. And when we held our loved ones again in our arms, we cried tears of joy and said “Thank God you’re okay!” But, did we really feel the appreciation in our hearts, or did we somehow attribute the miracles to the doctors and the medication?

Do we idolize the creations that have helped us and forget the Creator? Only you will know the answer to that...

When you put ALL your faith and trust in Allah , He will never let you down. Being grateful to Allah increases the love in your heart, and makes it reflect on everyone around you.

That doesn’t mean we don’t thank people, too. We must remember that Allah uses us as tools to help one another. There’s a middle ground between giving people all the credit and giving them nothing at all. Appreciation is the feeling people seek most. It creates a beautiful type of love that shrouds our good deeds and makes us want to help more and work harder to ease each other’s pain.

Abu Hurairah narrated that the Messenger of Allah said:

“Whoever is not grateful to the people, he is not grateful to Allah.” [Jami` at-Tirmidhi]

You need more clues, don’t you? Try showing your thankfulness to others with little gifts. Prophet Muhammad (saws) explained on many occasions that exchanging presents brings about genuine love between people.

Realize that Humbleness is the First Step to Wisdom

So you’re driving on the highway really fast and then with an expert’s swerve, you avoid a horrible accident. (Men will relate to that one!)

“A rookie driver would have been dead by now!” He will boast. “Man I’m GOOD!”

We can’t help but give credit to ourselves, and that’s okay, as long as we don’t forget that it’s all Allah’s command after all. So the next time you’re a bit smug about an achievement, or find yourself condescendingly giving charity to a poor person, remember that it’s not your money you’re giving away, and it’s not your smartness alone that made you ace that test. Modesty and humility lead to pure gratefulness to Allah and that is the essence of wisdom. Perfecting such perception gives you a rare kind of knowledge the world is more than thirsty for today.

“He gives wisdom to whom He wills, and whoever has been given wisdom has certainly been given much good. And none will remember except those of understanding.” [2:269]

Thank Him For Thanking Him!

Don't judge me but I'm a bit biased to Muslims. I believe those who have been guided to and properly practice Islam are already blessed with good hearts, and even though I'm preaching about the importance of praising Allah, I know on some level most of us have a deep innate gratitude for their blessings. So what do we do to show it? We thank Allah from the heart. But isn't that genuine feeling of gratitude a gift from Allah? Isn't that another blessing that needs a whole lot of gratefulness? Thank You Allah for letting us remember to thank You, and thank You again for reminding us to thank You for remembering to thank You. (Okay this could take a while. Help!)

Islamic scholars explain that it's when you're totally baffled on how to show your gratitude to the Supreme Lord that you reach true and genuine enlightenment.

A good example of struggling to show appreciation for your blessings is by sharing it! Giving charity makes both the giver and the receiver happy, and leaves us with double the amount of joy when we realize we have the power to change someone's life for the better. It makes sense that Allah gives more to the people who are busy thanking Him: be it more wealth, better health, wisdom or success. The root of joy is gratefulness, and it's a psychologically proven fact that you can rewire your brain to be happy by simply recalling three things you're grateful for every day.

"Yay! Let's do that! I'll go first!" my daughter said. "I'm grateful for hot meals in this freezing winter. I'm grateful my brother didn't act up today, and I'm grateful for my mother's warm hugs! Thank you Allah." My daughter smiled before closing her eyes to sleep.

As I tucked my kids in bed I thought about my three things. Am I more grateful for everything I have, or for all the horrible things that could have happened but never did?

Before you finish this article and close it, promise yourself this, will you? With every warm embrace from a loved one, with every meal you

set on the table, with every time you make your comfy bed and with every night you sleep safely in your own home, remember how much Allah loves you and takes care of you. Remember to be thankful for the little things and grateful for escaping the tragedies others are suffering from. Promise you'll cherish every single blessing with all your heart.

And don't forget to smile, for the daily smiles of joy are what makes our whole lives a constant celebration of gratefulness.

About the Author:

Lilly S. Mohsen is author of "The Prophets To Islam Kids' Series".

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"Have you seen the one who denies the Recompense? For that is the one who drives away the orphan, And does not encourage the feeding of the poor." [Surah Al-Ma'un:1-3]

These are just a few ideas that, as Muslims, we can implement in our lives to help us in trying to curb the "Social Media" frenzy sweeping the world by storm right now. However, always remember that no matter what you are doing in trying to becoming a better individual, don't give in to the urge to "take a picture and post it up".

"Those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah and then do not follow up what they have spent with reminders [of it] or [other] injury will have their reward with their Lord, and there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve." [Surah Al-Baqarah:26]

We need to realise that social media is designed to market us and market to us what we desire and want in life, causing us to sometimes lose ourselves in the process. It is important to sit back, relax, disconnect, close your eyes and really, truly reflect on your life and who you are. Reflect and remember the person you were, imagine the person you want to be and work on becoming the person you are meant to be – a person who is a Muslim first, benefitting society, this religion and most importantly yourself.

Removing Confusion

Understanding Sayyiduna ‘Ali’s Absence from the Campaigns of the First Three Khalifahs.

S. Taha

The assumption underlying the question is that since Sayyidunah Ali (RA) did not participate in the campaigns of the first 3 khulafa, it can only mean that he was averse to their rule, perhaps even to the point of not recognising the legitimacy of their rule.

However, this assumption can only be accepted if one is prepared to ignore the existence of several historical facts which glare at the objective observer from the pages of history. Some of these are given here:

1. While Sayyiduna ‘Ali (RA) might not physically have joined the campaigns, he was at the side of the khalifah in Madinah as a valued and trusted advisor – a position that is by no means less important than being at the battlefield. This is a fact documented in both Sunni and Shi’i sources. “Nahj al-Balaghah”, for example, records the advice given by Sayyiduna ‘Ali to Sayyiduna ‘Umar on two occasions. The first one appears as Sermon no. 133 and carries the heading “In reply to ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab who consulted him about taking part in the battle against Byzantine”. The second is numbered Sermond 145 and appears under the caption “Spoken when ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab consulted Amir al-Mu’minin about taking part in the battle of Persia”. In both instances the advice given

can clearly be seen to be aimed at the success of the campaigns.

2. It is also significant to note that although Sayyiduna ‘Ali did not personally join the armies on their expeditions, he duly received his share of the spoils of war. Abu Ubayd has recorded that Sayyiduna ‘Umar fixed Sayyiduna ‘Ali’s share at 5000 dirhams, and gave both his sons Hasan and Husayn a similar share of 5000. (“al-Amwal” p. 237) Another son of Sayyiduna ‘Ali, namely Muhammad, was born to him from a woman from Banu Hanifah who was brought to Madinah as a war captive by Khalid ibn al-Walid after his expedition against her tribe that had turned apostate with Musaylamah. This woman was given to Sayyiduna ‘Ali by Sayyiduna Abu Bakr. (“Tabaqat Ibn Sa’d” vol. 5 p. 67) and this Muhammad is known in history as Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyah.

3. If Sayyiduna ‘Ali’s not joining the campaigns of the three khulafa means that he was averse to their rule, how is one to interpret the fact that Sayyiduna Hasan and Sayyiduna Husayn both took part in the conquest of Tabaristan during the rule of Sayyiduna ‘Uthman under Sa’id ibn al-‘As in 30 AH? (See “Tarikh at-Tabari” vol. 5 p. 103, “al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah” vol. 5 p. 237)

4. Furthermore, what is one to make of the fact that those of the Sahabah upon whom the Shi'ah took favourably as devotees of Sayyiduna 'Ali and the Ahl al-Bayt unreservedly took part in the campaigns of Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman? Here one may speak of the following by way of example:

SALMAN AL-FARISI took part in Sayyiduna 'Umar's Persian campaign and played a crucial role in the conquest of Mada'in ("al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah" vol. 5 pp. 135-140). He had also acted as governor of Mada'in for Sayyiduna 'Umar ("al-Isabah" vol. 3 p. 113) and used to actively encourage the military campaigns in Syria by narrating ahadith on the virtues of jihad ("Ansab al-Ashraf vol. 1 p. 488)

HUDHAYFAH IBN AL-YAMAN had played a leading role in the conquest of Iraq. Like Salman, he too had acted as governor for Sayyiduna 'Umar ("al-Isabah" vol. 1 p. 332), and later joined military expeditions during the reign of Sayyiduna 'Uthman. He is described by the Shi'i scholar, al-'Allamah Ibn Mutahhar al-Hilli, as "one of the four pillars amongst the companions of Amir al-Mu'minin." ("Jami' ar-Ruwat" vol. 1 p. 182)

BILAL AL-HABASHI joined the campaign in Syria, either during the time of Sayyiduna Abu Bakr or Sayyiduna 'Umar. He died in Syria during the reign of the latter Umar. ("al-Isabah" vol. 1 p. 171)*

'AMMAR IBN YASIR took part in the campaign against Musaylamah in the time of Sayyiduna Abu Bakr. He fought valiantly, spurred on the Muslim forces, and lost his ear in this battle. Later, during the reign of Sayyiduna 'Umar, he accepted an appointment as the governor of Kufah under him. ("Tarikh al-Islam" vol. 2 p. 581)

ABU AYYUB AL-ANSARI is well known for his participation in several battles, not least amongst which was the expedition against Constantinople led by Yazid in the time of his father Mu'awiyah. Abu Ayyub was martyred during this expedition, and was buried under the walls

of the city. ("al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah" vol. 5 p. 518)

5. Apart from the above considerations, one also needs to keep in mind the sort of relationship that existed between Sayyiduna 'Ali and the khulafa before him. This relationship is best expressed in the fact that he named 3 of his sons Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman. This is confirmed even by an avowedly Shi'i source such as Shaykh Mufid's "Kitab al-Irshad" (pp. 268-269); and the fact that he married Umm Kulthum, his daughter from Sayyidah Fatimah, to Sayyiduna 'Umar. (For a more detailed discussion of the marriage of Umm Kulthum, see <http://www.ansar.org/english/marriage.htm>)

All things considered, the assumption that Sayyiduna 'Ali did not take part in the campaigns of the three khulafa on account of his differences with them, diminishes into an incongruous aberration of ridiculous proportions.

“Every da’wah (call) in the name of Islam and in the name of the legislation of the best of mankind (i.e, the Prophet (saws)), and is not upon the prophetic way, success will never be written for it, no matter how much propaganda is put in place for it or how much it is pushed in the society”.

*Shaykh Zayd ibn Muhammad al-Madhkali
al Ajwibat al Athariyyah*

Lifting the Veil of Harris & Hirsi

Mohammad Ghilan

New atheist/ex-Muslim Ayaan Hirsi Ali has been one of the people of interest to be discussed as of late. After much outcry, she lost an honorary degree that Brandeis University had intended to award her. They cite in their statement that Hirsi Ali's "*past statements are inconsistent with Brandeis University's core values.*" That was their politically correct way of saying they did not realize the extent her Islamophobia and bigotry had gone to when they initially wanted to award her that degree.

At the time there was a bit of social media lashing out that came from some figures, particularly among the new atheist crowd. Somehow it was turned into a freedom of speech issue, which it was most definitely not. For others it was a bogus Islamophobia issue – enter Sam Harris.

In spite of the increasing awareness of something wrong taking place in how Islam and Muslims are being viewed by some, Harris and other Islamophobia deniers refuse to acknowledge it as a real thing. They cover their bigotry with a veneer of what they call "justified criticism." For those who have trouble with the term, a report was released in 1991 in which it was used for the first time to incorporate the following cocktail of attitudes that Hirsi Ali, Harris, and many in their camp most definitely harbour:

- Islam is monolithic and cannot adapt to new realities
- Islam does not share common values with other major faiths
- Islam as a religion is inferior to the West. It is archaic, barbaric, and irrational.
- Islam is a religion of violence and supports terrorism.
- Islam is a violent political ideology.

Individuals like Harris and Hirsi Ali are not concerned to find out any truth. They may pretend to be rational, but they fit a description of the "sham inquirer" as put forth by Susan Haack:

A genuine inquirer aims to find out the truth of some question, whatever the color of that truth.... A pseudo-inquirer seeks to make a case for the truth of some proposition(s) determined in advance. There are two kinds of pseudo-inquirer, the sham and the fake. A sham reasoner is concerned, not to find out how things really are, but to make a case for some immovably-held preconceived conviction. A fake reasoner is concerned, not to find out how things really are, but to advance himself by making a case for some proposition to the truth-value of which he is indifferent.

Neither sham nor fake inquiry is really inquiry; but we need to get beyond this tautology to understand what is wrong with sham and fake reasoning. The sham inquirer tries to

make a case for the truth of a proposition his commitment to which is already evidence- and argument-proof.

In response to the onslaught of criticism directed at Hirsi Ali, including the online battle over whether Brandeis University was right to retract the honorary degree she was scheduled to receive, Harris decided to interview his dear friend Hirsi Ali so he can do his part to improve her image and “debunk” Islamophobia. What is great about this interview is that it offers a case study to show the blatant inconsistency and intellectual dishonesty that both Harris and Hirsi Ali bring to the table.

The first part of the interview was dedicated to context. Hirsi Ali was exposed in the past for having lied to gain asylum in Holland. Much of her story and what seems to be an over-dramatized and in certain aspects flat out fabricated family history were a subject of a television documentary. To address this, Harris gave Hirsi Ali all the space and time in the world to provide the circumstances in which she found herself compelled to lie in order to secure her asylum. What is interesting to note here is the patience, excuses, and personal investment Harris has in Hirsi Ali. He does mention that she is a symbol. So it was not surprising to see him pull all the stops to situate her lies in a context that she provides (and we cannot independently confirm by the way) in order to make everyone OK with the fact that she is a liar.

Once Hirsi Ali’s lies are contextualized for the reader, she remarks that her lies are not used against her per se. Rather, they are used as an instrument for a vilification campaign. Interestingly, both Harris and her immediately proceed with a quick use of their own vilification campaign instruments. They make mention of their usual talking points about what they say are problems in Islam: women inequality with men, apostasy, blasphemy, honor killings, denying girls education, denying women to leave their homes without male permission,

marriages for girls as young as 9, female genital mutilation, and stoning of homosexuals. These talking points have been addressed more than enough by Muslim figures (just do an honest hour of impartial research to find out how culture can trump religion in the Muslim world) but that does not matter for Harris and Hirsi Ali. They are sham inquirers after all.

Harris then asks Hirsi Ali about the difficulties she faced in pitching her work and why she works with the right-wing neoconservative American Enterprise Institute, a think tank she is criticized for associating with. She went on to outline how she received no interest from reputable institutions for her work, including the Brookings Institute, Georgetown, and John Hopkins. But Harris framed it in a liberal context:

So the truly mortifying answer to the question of why you are at the AEI is that no liberal institution would offer you shelter when you most needed it – and when your value to the global conversation about free speech, the rights of women, and other norms of civilization was crystal clear. And ever since, your affiliation with the one institution that did take you in has been used to defame you in liberal circles. Perfect.

Hirsi Ali tried to peddle the “they know my liberal stances on social issues and my atheism but do not challenge them” bit. The fact that the AEI does not challenge Hirsi Ali is not evidence for the institution’s impartiality. As Harris already mentioned at the very beginning, she is a symbol. What she serves as a symbol for an institution like AEI is far more valuable to them than to let her liberal positions, which they most certainly would have problems with, stand in the way of their greater Islamophobic causes.

When asked about the fierce criticisms she receives from moderate Muslims, Hirsi Ali claims it is a response to her putting them in a state of dissonance by what she says. That is a statement coming from someone who has a

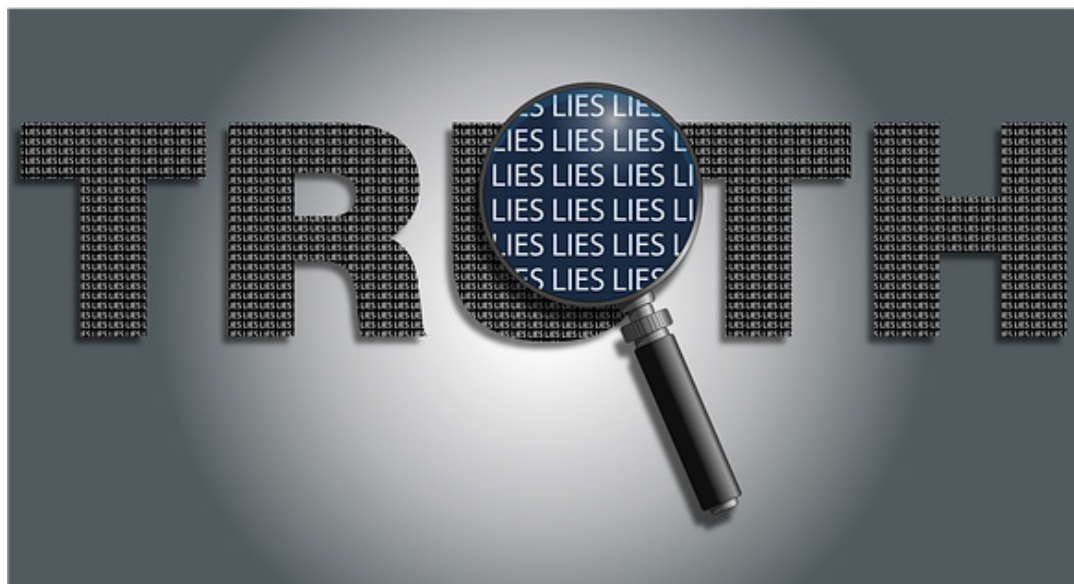
grandiose sense of self. The fact of the matter is that she does no such thing. Contrary to how she is popularized by her supporters, Hirsi Ali does not focus her efforts at women's issues because her primary motive is women's rights. If they were, she would not have the notoriety that she has today. Her major issue is with Islam (being an ex-Muslim Islamophobe is quite lucrative). She has stated this several times, and this is why she revels in the spot light. She and Harris casually dismiss everyone who does not see Islam the way they do, much the same way that extremists like Al-Qaeda do to other Muslims. Hirsi Ali and Harris are as rational when it comes to Islam, and religion in general for that matter, as any fanatic. The only difference is that they stand on the opposite end of the extremism spectrum. Their minds are fundamentalist minds.

Hirsi Ali wonders why she is always seen as a controversial figure. All one has to see is her inflammatory language, her constant equivocation between Islam as a religion and Muslims as a people, and her insistence at issuing wholesale blanket statements about all Muslims. What is a cause for wonder is her wonderment about why she is considered a controversial figure when she has made statements like, *"The battle against terrorism will ultimately be lost unless we realize that it is not just with extremist elements within Islam, but with the ideology of Islam itself."* If there should be a picture for the definition of Islam-

phobia, it should be of Hirsi Ali above this quote.

Like her dear friend Harris, Hirsi Ali also skillfully decontextualizes, and in some instances fabricates juristic rulings and attributes them to Islam. The decontextualization is evident in how she brings up inheritance laws, in which she cites one case where a woman inherits less than a man but ignores other cases where she inherits more (yes, believe it or not, inheritance laws in Islam are quite elaborate and more complicated than Hirsi Ali would like everyone to believe). The fabrication stands out screaming when she claims that under Islamic law, a woman's testimony against her rapist is worth half of her rapist's. This is a flat out and unequivocal lie. I do not say this based on my opinion or minority interpretations of Scripture. It is clearly stated in the Quran. But then again, why let facts get in the way?

The only reason people would believe Hirsi Ali's lies about Islam is because of her sinister ability to equivocate between Islam and Muslims, coupled with sensationalist stories sometimes reported in the media where Muslim women do face much oppression and injustice in Muslim countries. She claims that *"all these oppressions are justified using the core texts*



of Islam: the Koran and the hadith.” What the readers may not pick on is the difference between whether a practice is justified by Scripture, or if Scripture justifies a practice (there is a world of a difference between these two!). Then again, context only matters when we try to justify why Hirsi Ali is a known liar, but not when she and Harris vilify a religion upheld by over 1.6 billion people.

Not to miss the opportunity, Harris then brings in his own contentions about Jihad, making statements about all that fanaticism and violence we see in the Muslim world and how Islam is its ultimate source. Of course, anyone who spends just ten minutes online to look up the different polls conducted will see how Harris is a master at selection and omission. Sham inquiry takes skill after all. That is not to say that religion is not utilized in mobilizing violent forces in conflict regions (which is not all the Muslim world as Harris makes it seem), or even by fanatics who live among us. But the overly simple-minded analysis Harris offers to blame Islam is getting quite tiresome to read.

Let us not completely disregard the fact that there are extremists within Islam who approach Scripture in a deeply problematic way. Religion is an essential component of a Muslim’s life. But for Harris and Hirsi Ali, they only recognize its importance when it suits them, i.e., in the context of violent extremists who cite religion as their motivation to oppress women or commit violent acts. As for the overwhelming majority who cite religion for their peaceful coexistence with and acceptance of others, and even for elevating the status of women and condemning extremism, Harris and Hirsi Ali would readily tell us that these are people who do not take their religion seriously. So indeed, as Harris points out in the interview, the game is rigged. But not quite as he says – it is rigged for his and Hirsi Ali’s benefit.

When Hirsi Ali cites the numerous issues

facing American Muslim women with regards to summoning the courage to leave their abusive husbands, for example, she conveniently omits all local efforts and organizations set up by American Muslims themselves to address these problems from within. How she states the case, of course, further vilifies the religion and props her up as the savior. She makes it seem to the readers that it is her efforts finally coming to the aid of “**Muslim women [who] have no one to talk to.**” (Should point out how she and Harris talk about domestic violence in a way that gives the impression to the reader that it is a uniquely Muslim problem, which it is most certainly not!)

After all this, Harris has the nerve to accuse her critics of being dishonest!

Hirsi Ali then goes on to criticize how Muslims took advantage of the horrific murder of the Iraqi woman named Shaima Alawadi a couple of years ago. Granted, before the case was fully investigated, different campaigns were prematurely underway to pin this as an Islamophobia hate crime. But it ultimately turned out to be the husband who killed his wife. Hirsi Ali cites the reason to be her seeking a divorce and swiftly concludes it was an honor killing. How she could have known that and come to this callous conclusion, which in the context of the interview would pin it to Islam, is yet to be substantiated – not that she really cares to substantiate anything anyways.

The sinister nature of the conversation manifests throughout all of it. In one section, Harris talks about suicide bombing and jihad at the same time, letting the reader equivocate between the two on their own. He then concludes the paragraph by stating that most Muslims support jihadism, which in the mind of the reader would make it follow that most Muslims support suicide bombing.

There is more to say about this pernicious interview. Harris casually makes assertions about what tenets Islam has and which are “cen-

tral”, including his claim that death for apostasy is one such tenet (I have already discussed this issue in the recent Saudi and Sudan contexts). Hirsi Ali makes the overly simplistic claim that the latest coup in Egypt was because the people did not want to live under Sharia (How she could make this claim as someone who supposedly holds an M.A. in political science is puzzling. But then again, did she lie about her education like she lied about so much else? What can we really believe about her with all her fabrications?). Both Harris and Hirsi Ali position themselves as the concerned rational freedom fighting moral agents who just want to emancipate Muslims from their “harmful religion”. They are none of those things.

The problem is not just in how Hirsi Ali or Harris say things. It is also in what they say. Both of them are academically dishonest. They decontextualize and fabricate. They quote mine and use double standards that suit their purposes. Context only matters for their statements and actions. The extremism Harris and Hirsi Ali espouse is a stealth type. In contrast to terrorist groups like Al Qaeda who they are so concerned about, Harris and Hirsi Ali are among a group of people in the West who rather than personally plan or carry out violent attacks against civilians, they provide the pseudorational framework for those who orchestrate such attacks. Reading the conversation between Hirsi Ali and Harris reminded me of a passage in Chris Hedges’ *I Don’t Believe in Atheists*, which I will leave you with:

Harris follows the line of least resistance. He does not engage in the hard and laborious work of acquiring knowledge and understanding. Self-criticism and self-reflection are a waste of time. Nuance and complexity ruins the entertainment and defeats the simple, neat solutions he offers up to cope with the world’s problems. He does not deal in abstractions. He sees all people as clearly defined. The world as divided into those who embrace or reject his belief system. Those

that support him are good, and forces for human progress. Those that oppose him are ignorant at best, and probably evil. He has no interest in debate, dialogue or scholarship. Complexity makes it impossible to speak in absolutes. Complexity spoils the game.

Atheists like Harris, like the Christian fundamentalists, consider themselves the vanguard. They are the chosen few. They see and know the truth. They claim, like all of the elect throughout history, to be able to carry out the will of God or give us the tools that will advance human destiny. They have been given, by their own superiority and insight, the right to impose their vision on the rest of us. This vision is as seductive as it is absurd... Reality cries out against the impossibility of such a vision. But reality is not an impediment to fundamentalists, lured into the warm embrace of a world devoid of intellectual constructs and a confrontation with reality. The utopian dream repeatedly overpowers the intellect because it satisfies deep emotional and psychological longings. It fosters an exalted sense of self-worth. It justifies our indiscriminate use of power. Built on a scaffolding of lies, such beliefs allow the believer to reject compassion and empathy. They eradicate individual conscience. They are hard to resist.

p.s. I got a comment about this piece that I thought may be of interest to the one or two Harris and Hirsi Ali supporters who happen to genuinely be after actual rational inquiry and accidentally read this despite the internet algorithms that keep us enclosed in our own bubbles preaching to our own choirs:

“Hirsi Ali exists in her political form because — and this isn’t something that gets enough attention — there is a wider community who are predisposed to accepting the kind of things she says about Islam. She has a massive white liberal support base who aren’t necessarily openly critical of Islam but whose latent orientalism gets reaffirmed. For them, it matters little that she is contradictory, factually incorrect and has lied in the past. Her veneer of ‘authenticity’ (former muslim) makes it all go away.” — Sahar Ghumkhor

Sacrifices of the Sahaba

Ml. M. Yousuf Kandhlavi (ra)

Hadhrat Abuzar Ghifari's (RA) Conversion to Islam

Hadhrat Abuzar Ghifari (RA) is very famous among the Sahaabah for his piety and knowledge. Hadhrat Ali (RA) used to say: "Abuzar (RA) possesses such knowledge that other people are incapable of acquiring."

When he first got news of Nabi's (saws) mission, he appointed his brother to go to Makkah and make investigations regarding 'the person' who claimed to be the recipient of Divine revelation. His brother returned after the necessary enquiries and informed him that he found Muhammad (saws) to be a man of good habits and excellent conduct and that his wonderful revelations were neither poetry nor magic. This report did not satisfy him, he therefore decided to set out for Makkah and find out the facts for himself. On reaching Makkah, he went straight to the Harm. As he did not know Nabi (saws), he did not consider it advisable at that time, under the circumstances prevailing, to enquire about him from anybody. When it became dark, Hadhrat Ali (RA) noticed him and could not ignore him as he was a stranger. Hospitality and care for the travelers, the poor and the strangers was the Sahaabah's (RA) second nature, he therefore took him to his place. Neither did he ask him about the purpose of his visit to Makkah, nor did Abuzar (RA) himself disclose it. Next day, he again

went to the Haram and stayed there till nightfall without being able to learn who Nabi (saws) was. In fact everybody knew that Nabi (saws) and his companions were being persecuted in Makkah and Abuzar (RA) might have had doubts about the result of his quest for Nabi (saws). Hadhrat Ali (RA) again took him home for the night and once again did not have any talk with him about the purpose of his visit to the city. However, on the third night, after Hadhrat Ali (RA) had entertained him as on the two previous nights, he asked him: "Brother, what brings you to this town?" Before replying, Hadhrat Abuzar (RA) took an undertaking from Hadhrat Ali (RA) that he would speak the truth. He thereafter enquired from him about Muhammad (saws). Hadhrat Ali (RA) replied: "He is verily the Nabi of Allah. You accompany me tomorrow and I shall take you to him, but you have to be very careful, in case the people come to know of your association with me, and you get into trouble. When on our way I sense some trouble, I shall get aside pretending some necessity or adjusting my shoes, and you may proceed ahead without stopping so that the people may not connect us."

The next day, he followed Hadhrat Ali (RA), who took him before Nabi (saws). In the very first meeting, he embraced Islam. Fearing that the Quraish might harm him, Nabi (saws) enjoined upon him not to make an open declara-

tion of his Islam and asked him to go back to his clan and return when the Muslims had gained the upper hand. Hadhrat Abuzar (RA) replied: "O, Nabi of Allah! By Him who is the master of my soul, I must go and recite the Kalimah in the midst of these unbelievers."

True to his word, he went straight to the Harm and right in the midst of the crowd, at the pitch of his voice, recited Shahadah viz:

"I bear witness that there is no god save Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad J is the Nabi of Allah."

People attacked him from all sides and would have beaten him to death if Abbas (Nabi's (saws) uncle, who had not till then embraced Islam) had not shielded him and saved him from death.

Abbas said to the mob: "Do you know who he is? He belongs to the Ghifar clan, who live on the way of our caravans to Syria. If he is killed, they will waylay us and we shall not be able to trade with that country."

This appealed to their common sense and they left him alone.

Hadhrat Abuzar (RA) repeated the Shahadaat the next day and would have surely been beaten to death by the crowd had not Abbas once again intervened and saved him for the second time.

The action of Hadhrat Abuzar (RA) was due to his extraordinary enthusiasm for proclaiming Kalimah among the disbelievers, and the prohibition by Nabi (saws) was due to the soft corner in his heart for Hadhrat Abuzar (RA), lest he be put to hardships that might prove too much for him. There is not the least shadow of disobedience in this episode. Since Nabi (saws) himself was undergoing all sorts of hardships in spreading the message of Islam, Abuzar (RA) also thought it fit to follow his example rather than to avail of his permission to avoid danger. It was this spirit of Sahaabah (RA) that took them to the heights of material and spiritual progress. When a person once recited the Kalimah and entered the fold of

Islam, no power on earth could turn him back and no oppression or tyranny could stop him from Tabligh.

The Afflictions of Hadhrat Khabbab ibnul Arat (RA)

Hadhrat Khabbab (RA) is also one of those blessed persons who offered themselves for sacrifice and suffering for the cause of Allah. He was the sixth or seventh person to embrace Islam, and therefore, he suffered long. He was made to put on steel armor and lie in the sun to sweat and swelter. Very often he was made to lie flat on burning sand, which caused the flesh on his back to waste away.

He was the slave of a woman. When she came to know that he was visiting Nabi (saws) she used to brand his head with a hot iron rod. Hadhrat 'Umar (RA) during his caliphate, once inquired from Hadhrat Khabbab (RA) about the details of his sufferings after embracing Islam. He showed him his back, on seeing which Hadhrat 'Umar (RA) remarked, "I have never seen such a back before." He said, "My body was dragged over heaps of burning charcoal, and the blood and fat coming out of my back put out the fire." It is said that, when Islam spread and the Muslims conquered all the surrounding territory, he used to weep and say: "Allah seems to be compensating us in this world for all our sufferings and perhaps nothing would be left for us as reward in the Hereafter."

Hadhrat Khabbab (RA) narrates: "Nabi (saws) once performed an unusually long rak'at while leading Salaah. When the Sahaabah mentioned it to him, he said, 'This was a Salaah of yearning and humility. I asked of three favours from Allah. I begged of Him: O Allah! Let not my Ummat perish by famine; let not my Ummat be annihilated by an enemy gaining an upper hand on them; and let not my Ummat fight among themselves.' Allah granted the first two prayers, but not the third one."

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WRONG OR RIGHT

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzi (ra)
Translator: Omar Abdl Haleem

**Wrong is wrong even if everyone is doing it
Right is right even if only you are doing it**

The rational man is careful to uphold the positions of Allah even when it angers people. For he who takes the side of another at the price of the rights of the Creator, Allah turns the heart of the one he sought to please against him and makes that person despise him.

Al-Ma'mun [the third-century Abbasid caliph] once said to his retinue: "Do not disobey Allah by obeying me, lest Allah set me upon you." Now, Al-Ma'mun decreed the execution of his brother Al-Amin. Yet Tahir ibn Al-Husayn was excessive in carrying this out, for he dismembered him and put his head upon a shaft for public display. Even though Al-Ma'mun had ordered the execution, the traces of this excess remained in his heart, such that Al-Ma'mun became unable to look upon Tahir.

One day, Tahir entered upon Al-Ma'mun at court. Al-Ma'mun saw him and wept. Tahir said to him: "Why weep thou thus, may Allah never let your eyes weep [in sadness]. For, indeed, the people of all the lands have hailed you as rightful ruler?"

Al-Ma'mun replied: "I weep for a reason whose mention is humiliation, whose secreting is grief, and which will leave none without sorrow."

Tahir then exited the court, and giving two-hundred thousand dirhams to a servant of Al-Ma'mun named Husayn, he bade him find out why Al-Ma'mun wept when he saw him.

When Al-Ma'mun ate the mid-morning meal (al-ghada) he said: "O Husayn! Give me water!" "No, by Allah!" said Husayn, "I will not give you your water until you tell me why you wept when Tahir entered your presence."

"O Husayn! How is it that you have cared so dearly about this, such that you beseech me for its sake?"

"It is owing to my distress at seeing you cry," Husayn said.

"O Husayn! If what I tell you ever leaves your lips, I will put you to death."

"O my master! When have I ever divulged any secret of yours?"

"I remembered my brother Muhammad Al-Amin and the humiliation that befell him. My recurring remembrance of it has enraged me. I seek relief from it in my flowing tears. Thus harm shall befall Tahir from me."

When Husayn informed Tahir of this, the latter rode to Ahmad ibn Abi Khalid and said to him: "Indeed, a good deed is never wasted with me. So hide me from the eye of Al-Ma'mun."

"I shall," he said.

So Abu Khalid entered upon Al-Ma'mun and said: "I slept not last night." "Why could you not sleep?" Al-Ma'mun asked.

"Because you gave Ghassan ibn Abbas rule over Central Asia, and I fear that the Turkic people will attack him and overrun him."

"Who, then, do you see fit for this position?"

said Al-Ma'mun.

"Tahir ibn al-Husain," said Abû Khalid.

So Al-Ma'mun agreed and Tahir left for Central Asia.

There, Tahir remained the ruler for a time. Eventually, he stopped making du'ā' for Al-Ma'mun on the minbar (pulpit) during the Friday Salah. The man responsible for reporting back to Al-Ma'mun informed Tahir: "You did not pray for Amir Al-Mu'minin (the Commander of the Believers)." Tahir replied: "I forgot. So do not report it."

In the following khutba, however, and the one after that Tahir again failed to pray for Al-Ma'mun. So the man told Tahir: "I must report this now, for if I do not, the merchants who travel between Central Asia (Khurasan) and Iraq will inform him."

When the news of this reached Al-Ma'mun, he summoned Ahmad ibn Abi Khalid and said: "It has not gone unnoticed that you have deceived me about Tahir, and I have made a covenant to Allah that if you do not bring him before me, your punishment will be miserable."

Thus Ahmad ibn Abi Khalid departed in search of Tahir, reproaching himself along the way until he reached the province of Al-Ray whereupon he received the news of Tahir's passing. So much for the one who supports others against the rights of Allah.

The opposite of person who defends others against the prescriptions of Allah is one who is careful to take the side of truth and what is right, for the sincere believer who is angered by such a person will ultimately be pleased with him.

Thus the Wazeir (minister) Al-Walid ibn Habirah told me personally how he reached that rank. He said that Al-Mustanjid-billah once wrote him while Al-Mustanjid was the waliy al-ahd (caliphal heir). Al-Mustanjid requested that the contents of the letter be hidden from his father (the Caliph). When the letter reached

Al-Walid, and he was informed before reading it that he was to conceal it from the Caliph, Al-Walid said: "By Allah! I will not read it."

When Al-Mustanjid became caliph, and Al-Walid entered his court he said: "The greatest evidence of my truthfulness and my sincerity is that I was loyal to your father when he was Khalifah. You requested me to collude with you, and I refused." Al-Mustanjid replied: "You have spoken the truth. I deem you to be my [best choice of] Wazir."

Similarly, when the Sultan asked the jurists if it was permissible for him to have the title Malik Al-Muluk (King of Kings) all the jurists deemed it permissible, save Mawardi, who adjudged it forbidden. Thus his station was elevated in the eyes of the Sultan.

History is filled with such scenarios. Let one's intentions, then, be sincerely for Allah, even if it comes at the cost of the disapproval of people, or people shall surely go back to Allah and stand before Him in a state of complete humility and meekness.

Moreover, let none displease the Creator, for most surely people will despise him in the end for it, and thus shall he lose his prospects both for this life and the next.

Cont'd from page 44

Hadhrat Khabbab (RA) died in 37 A.H. He was the first of the Sahaabah to be buried at Koofah. Hadhrat Ali (RA) once passing his grave said: "May Allah bless and show mercy on Hadhrat Khabbab (RA). He embraced Islam willingly. He emigrated with great pleasure in Allah's path, and spent his whole life in striving and suffering for Islam. Blessed is the person who is mindful of the Day of Qiyaamah, prepares for his reckoning, remains contented with very little of this world and is able to please his Lord."

To be able to please Allah, was really the Sahaabah's greatest achievement, for this was the sole purpose of their life.

Appeal

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